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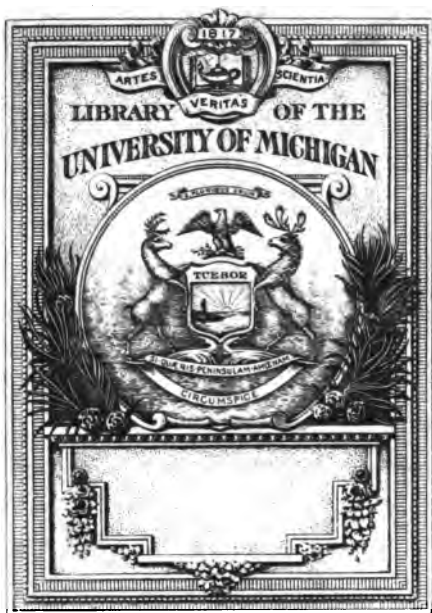
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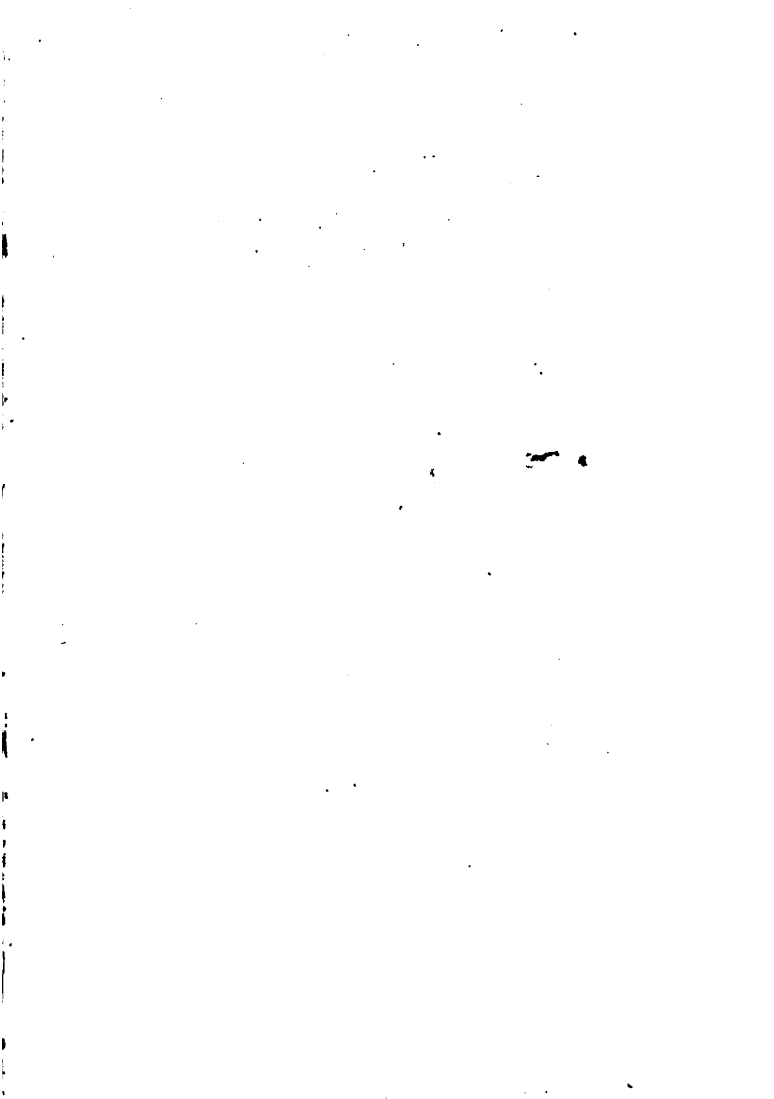
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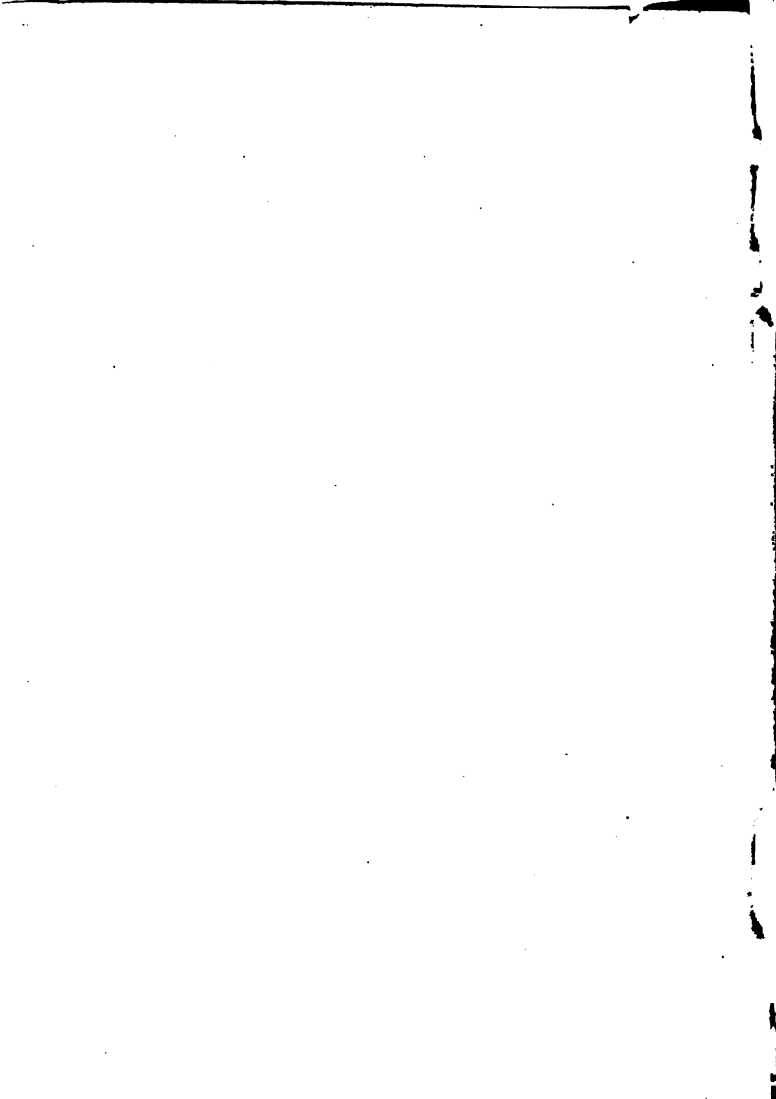
THE ENGLISH DRAMA

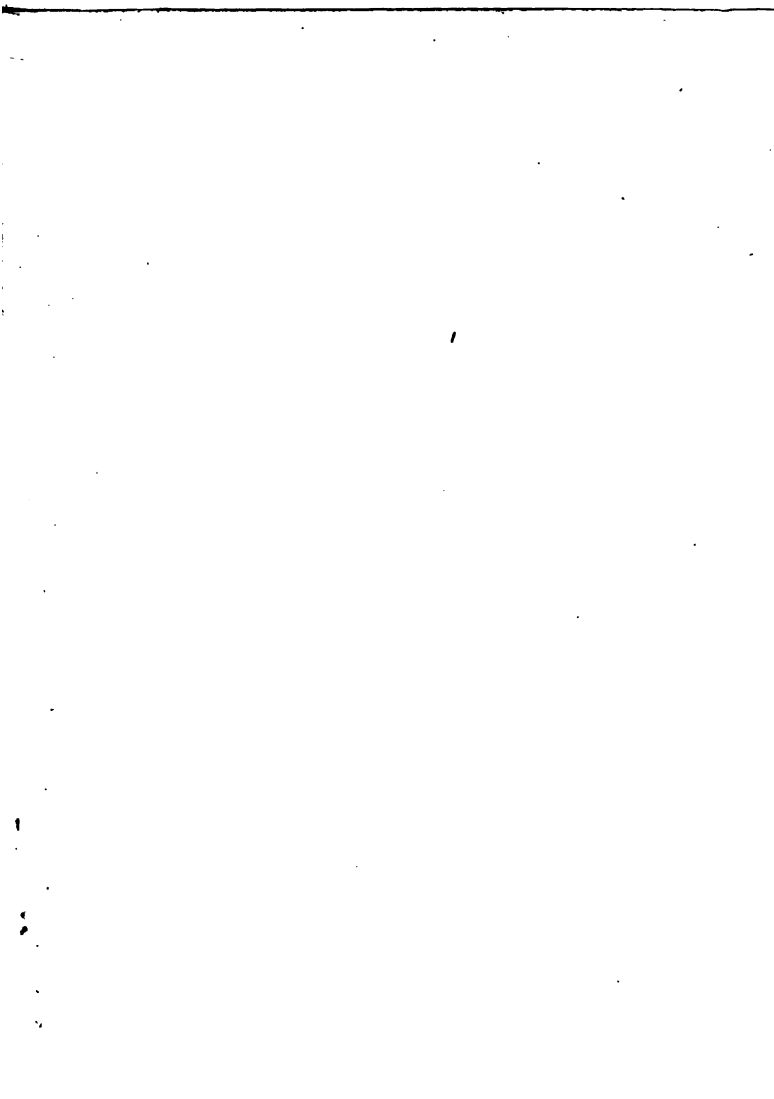
FROM ITS BEGINNING TO THE PRESENT DAY

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T. W. ROBERTSON



SOCIETY

AND

CASTÈ

Yonks
By T. W. ROBERTSON

EDITED BY

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"JOHN HARE, COMEDIAN," "THE KENDALS," ETC.

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Biography

C. 14. D. 15. S.
WILLIAM ROBERTSON, the father of T. W. Robertson, was articled to Mr. Whitson, a lawyer in Derby, but (being a Robertson!) he abandoned the study of the law, in which he evinced much promise, in order that he might become an actor, and he ultimately found a home in his uncle's Lincoln Circuit Company, of which he afterwards became manager. In this company he met Miss Marinus, a charming young actress, to whom he was married in 1828. They became the parents of a very large family : Thomas William Robertson (born at Newark-upon-Trent, Nottinghamshire, on January 9, 1829) being the eldest, and Margaret Shafto Robertson (Mrs. Kendal, born at Great Grimsby, Lincolnshire, twenty years later), being the youngest.

Almost as soon as they could walk and talk the young Robertsons were made familiar with the mysteries of the theatre, playing children's parts, and in many ways making themselves useful. Constant journeying from town to town, and the waning fortunes of the once profitable "Circuit" days, rendered their early education a matter of difficulty, but luckily for them their father was a man of high culture, — a constant reader, and a deep thinker, — and in him they found the kindest and most earnest of tutors.

But other efforts at education were made, and when "Tom" was about seven years of age, he was sent to the Spalding Academy, and during the four or five years that he remained there, he was exceedingly popular both with his masters and his school-fellows. Often some

quaint and *apropos* quotation from a part he had played in his childhood would "set the schoolroom in a roar." From Spalding he was sent to a school at Whittlesea, and there he remained until his father's theatrical undertaking became so profitless that economy compelled, rather than suggested, Robertson's return to the stage.

After a time he became weary of a state of things that he knew must end in disaster, and, restless and ambitious, he determined to make a new departure on his own account. During all his hard-working "Circuit" days he had not for one moment relaxed his studies. From his father he received abundant assistance, and he had especially perfected himself in the French language, which he spoke as if to the manner born. His desire to read and write and to add to his education was insatiable, and it was this that induced him, in 1848, to engage himself as an English-speaking usher in a school at Utrecht, in Holland. The experience proved miserably disappointing, and, having squandered his small savings in his outfit and the journey, he had to apply to the British Consul and avail himself of his kindly help to rejoin his family at his own birthplace.—Newark. Then he recommenced the old and unremunerative work. This he continued until the disbanding of his father's company threw him upon his own resources, when he went to London. The amount of work that he did there during his early struggling days was prodigious. In addition to writing and adapting plays he contributed stories, essays, and verses to many magazines: dramatic criticisms to several newspapers: and ephemeral work to numerous comic journals. But those were the days of Grub Street, and Grub Street pay, and do what he would he could scarcely earn a living when he fell in love with a charming young actress, — Miss

Elizabeth Burton, a beautiful girl of nineteen, — and on August 27, 1856, married her. Thus the foundation stone for a happy wedded life was laid, and the joys and anxieties of a troubled and so far sadly disappointed existence were doubled. "Marriage is one of those blessings that cannot be avoided," said Robertson speaking through the mouth of one of his characters in *Ours*, and apparently that is exactly what he found it. That it was a blessing to him is beyond all doubt, for he had a most devoted wife, but, alas! she was not permitted to share in his triumphs. They were so poor that, even when she was in delicate health, she continued to act in order to do her share towards keeping their little household (it soon contained two children) together. Three months before the success of *Society* in London told Robertson that he had won his goal she died (on August 14, 1865), and it was said among his most intimate friends of those days that his anguish was a terrible thing to witness. He had won the fame for which he longed, the fortune that might have saved the life of his dearly loved wife was within his grasp, and she, the loving helpmate of his stormy days, could take no share of the one or of the other. It was thought that from that grim hour he was never in actual health, and it was with this great sorrow rankling in his mind that he was wont to say, with the bitter satire of which he was a master, that he would like "to have the world as a ball at his feet that he might kick it."

Society was followed by the brilliant series of comedies that became world-famous, and fame and fortune were at last secured.¹ In the course of time he became the victim of an intense sense of loneliness, and on October 17, 1867, he married Miss Rosetta Feist, a young German lady from Frankfort-on-Main.

¹ For the titles and dates of Robertson's plays, see Bibliography.

A period of prosperity and contentment followed, but all too soon his fragile health broke down, and the hitherto untiring pen fell from his hand. The end was as swift as it was sad. He had written a play for the St. James's Theatre entitled *War*. Ill at home, he awaited its production with feverish impatience, knowing that it had neither the benefit of his care at rehearsals nor the style of stage-management that his pieces demanded. Produced, January 16, 1871, at a time when, in connection with the Franco-Prussian war, party feeling ran high, the play was undoubtedly a dangerous one, and in the rough and much-to-be-deplored English fashion it was too hastily condemned.

The poor sick author had arranged to have an account of the reception of the piece sent to him after each act : but, anticipating disaster, and fearing that if things did not go well he would not be told the whole truth, he gave particular instructions that his young son should be one of the party occupying the box set aside for his representatives. The next morning he easily drew from his artless lips a graphic account of the scene of vulgar massacre. After hearing it all, he lay back on his pillow and said with a sigh, "Ah, Tommy, my boy, they would n't be so hard if they could see me now. I shan't trouble them again."

On February 3, 1871, he passed peacefully away, and six days later he was laid to rest with his first wife in Abney Park Cemetery.

Introduction

IN the history of the English stage the name of Thomas William Robertson will always live, but the value of his work can only be truly appreciated by those who were familiar with the state of things prevalent in our little theatrical world before he obtained a long deferred hearing. In the late fifties and early sixties the condition of affairs at the London theatres was indeed deplorable. Good actors we no doubt had. Steeped in stage tradition, and with a love for what they called the "legitimate" side of their art, they could give a good if somewhat stilted account of Shakespeare, and it must be admitted that they played the comedies of Sheridan, Goldsmith, Holcroft, O'Keefe, Bickerstaff, and the rest of the 18th century dramatists, with a breeziness and breadth of style lacking in present-day comedians. Moreover they wore the costumes of bygone periods as if to the manner born, and carried themselves so bravely that audiences overlooked the poverty-stricken, slovenly way in which the pieces were placed upon the stage. To be sure impudent galleries and facetious pits were wont to amuse themselves by jeering at the footmen who, clad in crimson plush breeches, white stockings, and embroidered coats and waistcoats, used to come on to remove the furniture from a front-scene in order that one of greater pretensions might be exhibited, but it was in a spirit of good-humoured banter, not of resentment. Those poor stage footmen! Happily their day has gone. One of them once told the writer that he was "up" in all the leading Shakespearean and other well-known parts, and had followed his menial vocation for more than twenty years in the vain hope that some

great actor would suddenly fall ill and request him to take his place. Throughout those twenty years he had been the recipient of nightly derision, and probably the grand opportunity never came. But well though the actors of this period could render the work with which long apprenticeship in those invaluable dramatic schools, the stock-companies of such centres as Edinburgh, Dublin, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Bristol, had made them familiar, when they came to the modern comedy of their day they completely broke down. Probably they rather despised it. The writer has often heard actors of the old school speak with consummate contempt of what they called "trousers" parts, and their sister actresses doubtless had an equally strong predilection for the costume play. Even Charles Mathews, the most mercurial and delightful of comedians, seemed to patter through his parts with an artificial rather than a natural manner. It was diverting beyond measure, but it was redolent of the footlights. Except in melodrama, where some attention had to be paid to spectacular effect, the scenery and appointments were disgracefully meagre, and dramatists were so poorly paid that very few writers of the first rank thought of turning their attention stage-wards.

Writing of this distressing state of affairs the late Mr. Clement Scott said : —

"I can scarcely describe the slovenliness with which plays were performed, or the ludicrous managerial methods adopted to illustrate modern comedy. Such a thing as nature was scarcely known on the stage. Old men of sixty played lovers of twenty-one, and the costumes of ladies of fashion came out of the theatrical rag-bag. The stage wardrobe supplied the dresses, so the *ingénue* appeared in tumbled tarlatan, the leading lady in green or

orange satin, and the dowager in the black velvet and ermine of Lady Macbeth."

Mr. Scott was one of those who took a leading part in rejuvenating the drama as it was then played in London, and the pride that he took in his share of the work was thoroughly justified.

"I suppose you know," he wrote in another of his records, "that it was Mr. W. S. Gilbert who invented the name of 'Adelphi Guests,' in the admirable burlesques of popular plays that were printed every week in *Fun* when under Tom Hood's direction; but perhaps you do not know that it was mainly through these articles and the vigorous attacks made by the young literary and journalistic lions of the Arundel and Savage Clubs that was started the 'renaissance' of dramatic art at the old Prince of Wales Theatre in the Tottenham Court Road, resulting, as every one knows, in the birth of the Robertsonian plays and the founding of the fortunes of the Bancrofts. Anything more slovenly than the stage adornments of those days was surely never seen, and it may be imagined that the dramatic critics of the renaissance period were cordially detested by the Websters, Ansons, Churchills, Chattertons, and Kinlochs, who were content to allow matters on the stage to get from bad to worse, and did their best, but unsuccessfully, to pare the claws of the young lions of journalism who advocated the study of French dramatic art, then at its best,¹ deprecated the absurd theory that to see a French play well acted was to 'take the bread out of the mouth of the English actor,' and secured the desirable end by which stage decoration and stage dressing were properly attended to. The dress-

¹ In connection with this it is interesting to note that in later days Mr. Scott was one of the first to admit that England and America had fairly beaten France "at her own game."

ing of Mr. John Hare, Mr. Bancroft, and others, at the old Prince of Wales Theatre, in the early days, was quite a revelation."

One thing the actors of thirty-five years ago could do far better than those of to-day. They could play burlesque with a truer spirit of legitimate fun, and by their delightfully humorous impersonations made us forget the tawdry way in which the genuinely witty works of H. J. Byron, F. C. Burnand, Robert Brough, and other clever writers were staged.

Another injury from which the poor theatres suffered was the icy indifference of the press. Such a thing as a "first night" notice was rarely seen, and, again to quote Mr. Clement Scott, newspapers "looked upon the drama as a matter of as little importance to the public as a dog fight," and devoted mere brief paragraphs to theatrical novelties.

While in London things were in this most unsatisfactory condition, Robertson was studying his art in one of those rough schools known as the English "circuits," a development of the conditions under which the old strolling players were wont to act. Students of stage history will remember that Roger Kemble and his wife, the parents of the famous Mrs. Siddons, and of John Philip and Charles Kemble, travelled from town to town and village to village, after the manner and under the disadvantages and difficulties of their time, — at some places being received with gracious favour, and at others treated like lepers, and threatened with the stocks and whipping at the cart's tail, according as those in authority were liberal-minded or puritanical. One of the earliest successes of Sarah Kemble, who as Mrs. Siddons subsequently made London wild with enthusiasm, who caused one of the greatest critics of his day to say she had "like a resistless

torrent borne down all before her," and whose merit seemed "to have swallowed up all remembrances of present and past performers," who was painted as the Tragic Muse by the immortal Sir Joshua Reynolds with the inscription of his name on the hem of her dress, — one of her earliest successes was made as Ariel in a room, or barn, behind the King's Head Inn at Worcester, which boasted no other theatre. Some fifty years later the taste for dramatic art had so far increased that each county town or market town of importance had its own proper if primitive playhouse, — and the districts in which these were situated were mapped out into so-called "circuits," each division being controlled by a fairly responsible manager who travelled at the head of his own little company, which often included many members of his own family.

Charles Dickens saw all that was ludicrous in these peripatetic and inclined to be puffed-up players, and dealt with it inimitably in his account of Mr. and Mrs. Vincent Crummles, their progeny and supporters; but they were for the most part painstaking and praise-worthy people, taking deep interest in their work and great pride in their rendering of the Shakespearean and "legitimate" drama. Although the stock-companies in the larger towns and cities formed the best schools, many good actors sprang from their ranks, and in their day they served a useful purpose.

For many years the Lincoln circuit was in the hands of the always artistic but by no means opulent Robertson family, and at a very early age the subject of this sketch found himself working for his father (who then controlled the enterprise), in the busy little world behind the scenes: working, too, in so many different ways that he soon mastered the rudiments of every branch of the complex art for which he was to do so much. It is well to

dwell a little on this, because it will show why he grew so dissatisfied with the existing state of things, and longed to take part in their reformation.

Certainly he worked under primitive conditions. The towns visited were Lincoln, Boston, Grantham, Newark, Stamford, Wisbech, Peterborough, Whittlesea, Huntingdon, and others in the English eastern counties. The company stayed for three or four weeks in each town, returning for any special occasion, such as a fair or a race week. Talking of those days, Robertson's sister and early comrade, Miss Fanny Robertson, said to the writer, — "In the summer the journeys were very pleasant, and we youngsters greatly enjoyed them. At many a wayside inn where we used to stay to refresh on ham and eggs, and bread and cheese (delicious fare when one is really hungry), our coming used to be eagerly anticipated, and I have often heard a landlord say, — 'I thought you would be here soon; I have been expecting you.' We were always welcomed with a smile, and we children were allowed to gather flowers and fruit. In the winter it was not so agreeable. We had to rise in the dark, and very often had to get out of our conveyance to walk up the hills in the snow. I remember once going up a hill close by Grantham; we were 'stuck fast,' and all had to alight, the gentlemen of the company literally 'putting their shoulders to the wheel.' "

She had many anecdotes to tell of her brother's early achievements as an actor, and the presence of mind he would show at necessarily scrambled performances, when in stage dilemmas more experienced people would lose their heads. From her the writer learned, too, how soon Robertson began to write the then popular low-comedian's *entr'acte* songs, and even in that poor, not to say humiliating form of stage work, attempted reforms.

"Tom," Miss Robertson said, "was always clever with his pen, and as soon as he could write he was at work at plays for us to act as children. Later on he wrote for the company. As soon as the book was published (he was then seventeen years of age), he dramatised Charles Dickens's story, *The Battle of Life*, and two years later he produced a stage version of *The Haunted Man*. I remember our waiting very anxiously for the earliest possible copies of these Christmas books, and how we at once went with them to the theatre, I acting as amanuensis, and he walking about with the story in his hand and dictating to me. When the manuscript was finished, it was taken home to be altered or approved by our father. Both plays were produced in Boston."

Thus early, in spite of himself, and in accordance with the barbarous piratical custom of his time, the author of *Caste* was set to work. It is certain that he must have hated it, for if ever soul of honour breathed it lay near the heart of Thomas William Robertson. Throughout his long struggles and disappointments, and in the days of his triumphs, he might well have taken for his motto the well-known lines : —

"The world has battle room for all.
Go ! fight and conquer if ye can ;
But if ye rise, or if ye fall,
Be each, pray God, a gentleman."

With certain intervals for education, and one great struggle for emancipation to which I shall allude hereafter, he continued to write, act, manage, prompt, paint, and perform every conceivable duty, in the theatres on the Lincoln circuit, and it can be gathered that, as far as he was concerned, his famous remark of being "nursed on rose-pink and cradled in properties" had abundant

foundation. But times were changing, and hard and conscientious work could do nothing for the numbered days of the Lincoln circuit. Every season became worse and the once faithful audiences no longer supported the time-honoured and industrious little company. Railways had sprung up and destroyed the comparative isolation of the small from the larger towns, and local interests became absorbed in the now accessible wonders to be seen in the great world outside the little circle to which they had been accustomed. Speedily and disastrously the end came ; the company had to be disbanded, and the familiar and historical Lincoln circuit became a thing of the past. Left to his own resources, Robertson — then about twenty years of age — naturally sought the bustling world of London, and, to use his own words, “ceased to live and began to exist.”

He spoke bitterly, for everywhere he met with disappointment. In the eastern counties he could at least claim friends ; in London he was forlorn, and quickly found that the experience he had gained, and which he thought would serve him well, was very cheaply appraised. He was amazed, also, to find that in the vaunted metropolitan theatres pieces were so poorly produced, and so cheaply staged. Qualified and anxious to work with his pen, he was wholly unable to meet with encouragement or remunerative employment, and, in order “to keep body and soul together,” the poor fellow was compelled to hover about the playhouses, hoping to secure such paltry acting engagements as chance placed in his way. These sometimes took him into the country, sometimes kept him in London ; but they were always of the briefest duration, and were generally under the management of a gentleman who “had been occasionally known to pay half-salaries, but full ones never.”

In such leisure as he could command he continued to write, and to his over-weening joy he at length had a two-act comic drama accepted by Mr. William Farren, then manager of the Olympic Theatre. This was entitled *A Night's Adventure, or Highways and Byways*, and it was produced on August 25, 1851. Alas! for the sanguine young dramatist, it did not prove his much longed for and eagerly anticipated rescue from oblivion. By the management it was advertised as "a great success," but it was condemned by the critics, and had a brief and inglorious run.

Poor Robertson's disappointment cut him to the quick, and when Farren, chagrined by the loss and vexation consequent upon failure, angrily declared that it was "a damned bad play," Robertson unwisely sealed his fate at the Olympic by retorting (unluckily Robertson was ever too ready with a retort) that it was "not so bad as the acting."

He was incensed, too, at the careless way in which his piece was staged. Until he (thanks to the Bancrofts) was very wisely allowed to have his own way at the Prince of Wales Theatre this was a constant source of irritation to him, not only in his own plays, but in those of other authors. Our leading English dramatist of to-day, Mr. Arthur Wing Pinero, who always avows himself one of Robertson's stanchest disciples and admirers, evidently is able to enter into his feelings; for in his four-act comedita, *Trelawney of the Wells*, the action of which is laid in the "early sixties," he gives, in the character of the ambitious young actor-author, Tom Wrench, a sympathetic portrait of his master in the days before he could speak with authority. Finding himself in Sir William Gower's substantially furnished house in Cavendish Square, poor Wrench, impersonating Robertson, says, "This is the

kind of chamber I want for the first scene of my comedy. . . . I won't have a door stuck here, there, and everywhere; no, nor windows in all sorts of impossible places! . . . Windows on the one side, doors on the other—just where they should be architecturally. And locks on the doors, real locks, to work; and handles, to turn. Ha, ha! you wait! wait!" Mr. Pinero's lines have fallen in pleasanter places, and yet in some of the best West-End theatres of to-day he has had to exercise his authority as to some of these small but by no means unimportant details.

What the failure of *A Night's Adventure* meant to Robertson, and how he suffered under the disaster, no tongue can tell. It was not a bad play, and he knew it, but its untoward fate set managers against his work, and with a heavy heart he resumed his calling as a theatrical "jack of all trades." He had to earn his own living, and so took any hack work that came in his way. In despair of obtaining a hearing for his original conceptions he adapted a great number of plays from the French, and disposed of them for what he could get to Thomas Hailes Lacy, the well-known theatrical book-seller and publisher. Many of them are still on the list of Lacy's successor, Samuel French.

The rebuffs he was in the daily habit of receiving at this period, and the manner in which he chafed under them, were, in more prosperous times, described by him in a satirical speech put into the mouth of Rudolph Harfthal, a character in the comedy entitled *Dreams*. Harfthal, who is a gifted young composer,¹ thus speaks of the trials and troubles experienced by the novice anxious to obtain a hearing in London: "In England," he says bitterly, "yesterday is always considered so much better than to-day; last week is superior to this; and

¹ Of course Robertson had the playwright rather than the composer in his eye.

this week so superior to the week after next ; thirty years ago is much more brilliant an era than the present ; the moon that shone over the earth in the last century so much brighter and more grand than the paltry planet that lit up the night last past ! I shall explain myself better if I give my own personal reasons for making a crusade against age. In this country I find age so respected, so run after, so courted, so worshipped, that it becomes intolerable. I compose music ; I wish to sell it. I go to a purchaser and tell him so ; he looks at me, and says : ‘ You look so young,’ in the same tone that he would say, ‘ You look like an imposter or a pickpocket.’ I apologise as humbly as I can for not having been born fifty years earlier ; and the publisher, struck by my contrition, thinks to himself, ‘ Poor young man ! after all, he cannot help being so young,’ and addressing me as if I were a baby, says, ‘ My dear sir, very likely your composition may have merit — I do not dispute it — but you see, Mr. So-and-So, aged sixty, and Mr. Such-an-one, aged seventy, and Mr. T’other, aged eighty, and Mr. Somebody-else, aged ninety, write for us ; and the public are accustomed to their productions ; and we make it a rule never to give the world anything written by a man under fifty-five years old. Go away now ; keep to your work for the next thirty years ; during that time exert yourself to grow older — you will succeed if you try hard — turn gray, be bald ; it’s not a bad substitute — lose your teeth, your health, your vigour, your fire, your freshness, your genius — in one short word, your terrible, abominable youth ; and some day or other, if you don’t die in the interim, you may get the chance of being a great man.’ ”

Poor soul-tormented Robertson ! If he had lived until to-day he would find that in comedy such a long speech as the foregoing would be condemned as hopelessly old-fashioned ; and that it is the man of forty who is sup-

posed to have exhausted the best part of his life, and who finds it difficult to convince others that he is still capable of doing good work.

No doubt Robertson found the theatrical world of London not only conservative but stagnant. Happily a change was at hand, and he, being ready for it, was in due course able to take his place as one of its foremost leaders. His aim, absolutely natural acting in perfectly staged plays, was a high ideal, but proved, when the chance was given him, attainable.

The change came with the advent in 1860 of Fechter. He had been heralded by Charles Dickens, who, having seen him in a minor Parisian theatre, liked to describe his experience. "He was making love to a woman," he said, "and he so elevated her as well as himself by the sentiment in which he enveloped her, that they trod in a purer ether, and in another sphere, quite lifted out of the present. 'By Heavens!' I said to myself, 'a man who can do this can do anything.' I never saw two people more purely and instantly elevated by the power of love."

But in England the new and natural actor was to meet with opposition. Of Fechter's earliest appearances in London Mr. Clement Scott said: "*Ruy Blas* succeeded beyond anticipation, but when the next move was announced there was a perfect howl of execration. Fechter, the Frenchman, was advertised to play Hamlet, to play the Prince of Denmark in a flaxen wig, to discard the black velvet, the bugles, and the funereal feathers, to make Hamlet a man, and not a mouthing mountebank. The old playgoers raved and stormed, and would not be comforted. The new generation applauded with both hands, not for the mere sake of opposition, but because they were really interested in the new Hamlet. It is too late now to revive the old discussion. I was very young at the time, but I own I was one of the fascinated Fecht-

erites. I had been through a course of Shakespeare under Charles Kean and Samuel Phelps, at the Princess's and Sadler's Wells ; but with all its false intonation, all its occasional levity, all its melodramatic trick, I sat spell-bound under Fechter, and seemed to understand Hamlet for the first time. . . . I for one am not sorry, in the interest of English art, not only that Fechter came among us, but that he dared to play Shakespeare in a natural manner. From that moment the tide changed. We began to visit Paris, and to see different phases of art ; we welcomed foreign artists to our shores without a murmur ; we, who wrote about plays and players, were not hustled out of our employment because we would not be the slaves of a set of effete and incompetent fossils ; newspapers began to devote important space to the daily record of the drama. From the early success of Fechter, the French actor, I venture to date what I have heard called the birth-time of natural acting in England, the renaissance of English dramatic art."

Among those who noted with satisfaction the growing change in taste no one rejoiced more than poor slighted Robertson.

In connection with Fechter and his new critics the editor cannot refrain from re-telling the following anecdote. Said a playgoer to his companion between the acts of *Hamlet*: "It isn't Shakespeare's Hamlet ; it's all wrong. The fellow doesn't accentuate the part properly. It's a foreigner's Hamlet ; — that's what it is."

"Well, but Hamlet was a foreigner, wasn't he ?" asked his friend doubtfully.

"Well, — yes, of course I know that," said the critical gentleman, — "but confound it, it's an English play, and ought to be acted from that point of view."

Of such stuff were theatre-goers made in the year of grace 1860 !

In 1861 E. A. Sothorn, who had served his apprenticeship at the Theatre Royal, Birmingham, and graduated in America, came to the Haymarket. Lord Dundreary, the part in *Our American Cousin* with which he opened, was of course mere caricature, but the consummate ease with which it was played seemed to make it true to life, while the little one-act plays in which from time to time, during the long period that his lordship held the stage, Sothorn appeared, proved that in him another absolutely natural actor had been found.

Robertson's heart warmed towards Sothorn, and he sent him his play, *David Garrick*, adapted from the French comedy, *Sullivan*, which had "slumbered in a drawer for about seven years." To his intense joy it was accepted. It followed *Our American Cousin*, became a great success, and, thanks to Sir Charles Wyndham (who succeeded Sothorn as Garrick), holds the stage to the present day.¹

From this time Robertson's path became comparatively clear, although he had some obstacles to face before he could walk freely in the highway that leads to fame

¹ Robertson was so fascinated with his theme that he had expanded it in narrative form. It makes a charming story, is instinct with knowledge of the stage as it was in Garrick's day, and should not have been allowed to die. For reasons that are only too apparent, the novel did not find a publisher until the success of the play had made the name of its author famous. It was brought out by S. O. Beeton in 1865, and contained the following graceful dedication to the creator of Robertson's favourite character:—

"My dear Sothorn,

"I dedicate this little book to you for reasons which will be obvious to those readers who do me the honour to peruse the preface. Though the offering be small, it is made with as much kindly feeling as if the matter contained in this single volume were as weighty and well arranged as the contents of a large dictionary.

"Accept it then, my dear Sothorn, with all its faults, though they are neither few nor far between; a circumstance which should not surprise you when you remember that it is the work of

"Your very sincere friend

THE AUTHOR."

and fortune. Sothern, delighted with his new triumph, suggested that its author should write him an original comedy in which his part, that of a gentleman of the day, with a strong dash of Bohemianism in his nature, should have a scene in which, overwrought by nerves and a little champagne, the hero would become sentimentally and heroically intoxicated. When finished, *Society*, as the comedy was called, was read to Sothern, who was delighted not only with the play but with his part, which was of course that of Sidney Daryl. But before the piece could be produced at the Haymarket it had to be submitted to its manager, that very amusing comedian, but decidedly conservative and obstinate old gentleman, John Baldwin Buckstone. To the dismay of the eager author and sanguine actor that authority scribbled on the manuscript his opinion of it in the one word, "rubbish," and contemptuously returned it to them. In vain Sothern argued with him. Buckstone would have nothing to do with *Society*, and as Sothern was bound by an agreement to act for a long period at the Haymarket, the case was a hopeless one. Under the unfortunate circumstances Sothern did the best he could. He induced Robertson to accept a retaining fee for the piece, declaring that he would appear in it on the earliest possible opportunity, — but at the same time advising him to find it another London home.¹

So, with Buckstone's unjustifiable word "rubbish" blotted out by an angry hand, *Society* was hawked about among all the leading London managers, and by one and all rejected. But it so happened that a new management, that commenced under what seemed to be very

¹ Some time after Robertson's death the original manuscript of *Society* fell into the hands of the writer of these lines. Feeling it to be an item of interest in the history of the stage, he gave it to the Shakespeare Memorial Library, Stratford-on-Avon, and there, with "blot" complete, it may be seen.

poor auspices, yet was destined to cast all others in the shade, was just springing into life. Miss Marie Wilton, the darling of the Strand Theatre, and the life and soul of the merry and really witty burlesques (what a contrast to the vapid "musical comedies" of to-day!) that then formed the staple fare at that popular little playhouse, was anxious to spread her wings and try her strength in comedy. With that object in view she had taken the old Prince of Wales Theatre, hard by Tottenham Court Road, — a place of amusement that had fallen into such disrepute that it was sneeringly nicknamed "The Dust-bin." Robertson's life-long friend H. J. Byron recommended *Society* to this courageous young manageress. So different in treatment was it from the plays with which theatre-goers were then apparently well pleased that Miss Wilton's friends and admirers frankly warned her that its production was "dangerous." The supposed danger lay in the simplicity of the play. True to nature it might be, but audiences accustomed to theatrical types verging on the border-land of caricature would (so managers thought) be hardly likely to accept a mere photograph of human life. It was the old tale of actors' portraits — "Penny plain and tuppence coloured." The coloured articles had the readiest sale in the shops, *ergo* they could not be made too florid in the theatres. Miss Wilton, however, having in common with Sothorn estimated *Society* at its true worth, declared that danger was better than dulness, selected her supporters, and under the now delighted author's superintendence, commenced rehearsals. After some preliminary difficulties it was produced, — first in Liverpool and then in London.

Having been very favourably received in the Lancashire city, *Society* was produced in the metropolis on November 11, 1865, and on the following day Robertson

awoke to find himself famous. The success of the piece was, indeed, instantaneous, and soon became the talk of the town. Not to have seen Marie Wilton as Maud Hetherington, Bancroft as Sidney Daryl, John Hare as Lord Ptarmigan, John Clarke as John Chodd, junior, Fred Dewar as Tom Stylus, and Sophie Larkin as Lady Ptarmigan, was to argue yourself unknown; and so at one and the same moment the fortunes of a luckless theatre and a hitherto misunderstood dramatist were made. How much of this success was due to Robertson may be told in Mr. Bancroft's own words: "As the part I first played in *Society*," he says, "was a very important one to intrust to so young an actor as I then was, bearing as it does much of the burden of the play, I should like to note how much of the success I was fortunate enough to achieve was due to the encouragement and support I received from the author, who spared no pains with me, as with the others, to have his somewhat novel type of characters understood and acted as he wished."¹

He might have added — but perhaps he hardly realised it — that the triumph of the whole play owed much to the tact and the liberality of the clever lady who allowed Robertson to have his own way with the stage-management and (as far as was then possible) with the mounting of his work. In connection with that epoch-making first night of *Society*, Mr. Clement Scott wrote: —

"There was a great gathering of the light literary division at the little Theatre in Tottenham Court Road on the first night of Tom Robertson's new play. It was our dear old Tom Hood, who was our leader then, who sounded the bugle, and the boys of the light brigade cheerfully answered the call of their chief. I remember that on that memorable night I stood — for there was no

¹ *Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft on and off the Stage*. Vol. I. Note, p. 202

sitting room for us on such an occasion — by the side of Tom Hood at the back of the dress circle. The days of stalls had not then arrived for me. Suddenly there appeared on the stage what was then an apparition. Bancroft had delighted us with his cheery enthusiasm and boyish manner, for he was the lover in this simple little play, — well dressed and, for a wonder, natural. Think what it was to see a bright, cheery, pleasant young fellow playing the lover to a pretty girl at the time when stage-lovers were nearly all sixty, and dressed like waiters at a penny ice-shop ! Conceive a Bancroft as Sidney Daryl in the days when W. H. Eburne played young sparks at the Adelphi, and old Braid was the dashing military officer at the Haymarket ! But what astonished us even more than the success of young Bancroft was the apparition that I have spoken of just now. A little delightful old gentleman came upon the stage, dressed in a long, beautifully cut frock coat, bright-eyed, intelligent, with white hair that seemed to grow naturally on the head — no common clumsy wig with a black forehead-line — and with a voice so refined, so aristocratic, that it was music to our ears. The part played by Mr. Hare was, as we all know, insignificant. All he had to do was to say nothing, and to go perpetually to sleep. But how well he did nothing ! how naturally he went to sleep ! We could not analyse our youthful impression at the time, but we knew instinctively that John Hare was an artist. Had *Society* been accepted at the Haymarket — which, luckily for Tom Robertson, it was not — the part of Lord Ptarmigan would have been played by old Rogers, or Braid, or Cullenford, — Chippendale and Howe would certainly have refused it as a very bad old man. No ; Tom Robertson's lucky star was in the ascendant when *Society* was refused by the Haymarket management with scorn.

Had it failed there, I believe my old friend would have 'thrown up the sponge' and never worked for the stage any more. The refusal of *Society* by Buckstone, and the keen and penetrating intelligence of Marie Wilton, who was determined that Tom Robertson should succeed and that his plays should be acted, were the turning-points in the doubtful career of a broken-hearted and disappointed man. I don't think I ever remember a success to have been made with slighter material than that given to Mr. Hare. And it was a genuine success. We of the light brigade could not work miracles. We might have written our heads off, and still have done no good for the new school. Luckily there was at that time as critic to the *Times* a man of keen and penetrating judgment. John Oxenford knew what was good as well as any man, and he knew how to say it into the bargain. He was not a slave to old tradition, and when he had a good text what a wonderful dramatic sermon he could preach! Luckily, also, the new school had the constant support and encouragement of the *Daily Telegraph*, whose leading proprietor and director, Mr. J. M. Levy, never missed a first night in the company of his artistic and accomplished family. All that was liberal and just and far-seeing was in favour of the new Robertsonian departure — of a dramatist who was not old-fashioned and dull, and of actors so new, so fresh, so talented, as Bancroft, Hare, and their companions. The heavy brigade of influential writers, led by John Oxenford, patted the new movement on the back; the light division, led by Tom Hood and others, lent their enthusiasm to the good cause. Gilbert, Prowse, Leigh, Millward, Archer, — all of us, in fact, who knew Robertson and appreciated his talent were the first to step forward and back up our friend's success in every way that was possible."

In view of the contemptuous manner in which *Society* had hitherto been treated by London managers, and Robertson's firm and even touching faith in the value of his own original work (a faith so amply justified by his subsequent productions), it would be pleasant, if space permitted, to quote the opinions of the leading critics on what may be definitely called "a new departure." Suffice it to say that success was proclaimed all along the line, and that the public gladly endorsed the verdict of the critics.

The writer has dwelt at some length on this production because it should be clearly understood that Marie Wilton, Bancroft, John Hare, and others who believed in natural acting could not have gained their goal without being provided with natural material. Robertson was the only writer of that day prepared to supply it, and it must never be forgotten that he was not only author but stage-manager, and that the comedy was produced under his personal superintendence. He was allowed to deal with his own play in accordance with his own ideas ; he was blessed with a company of brilliant young actors willing to listen to him ; and at a time when the London theatres sorely needed it he was able to hold the mirror up to nature.

Whatever its faults *Society* took the town by storm, and was the forerunner of improved conditions for the English drama and stage. That is why Robertson's name must ever take a place in the front ranks of the history of our English drama. When all is said and done the pioneer deserves a higher place in our esteem than those who follow in his footsteps, take advantage of, and mayhap widen the pathway he has made.

To those who read *Society* after the lapse of nearly forty years it is sure to seem somewhat old-fashioned not only in dialogue and characterisation but construction. Instead

of the one "set" for each act to which we are now accustomed there are two scenes in the first act, two in the second, and three in the third; while such long "asides" as that given to Chodd Junior in the final scene of the last act would not be permitted to-day. It is odd to note that in 1865 the scene in a London square was thought to be such a daring attempt at realism that it caused quite a sensation. If Robertson had re-written the piece towards the close of his too brief career he would not have made Sidney Daryl say in response to Maud's "Isn't it a funny name? Chodd?" "Yes, it's a Chodd name—I mean an odd name,"—but he had lived in the days when the pun raised a laugh, and the more outrageous the pun was, the more cordially it was received. The election customs, as shown at the Wells at Springmead-le-Beau, with its speeches from the hustings, and so forth, are of course obsolete; and it is satisfactory to know that that libel on an ancient and honoured race, the comic stage Jew, as depicted in Moses Aaron (the descendant of an old theatrical tribe among whom Sheridan's Moses in *The School for Scandal* was permitted to take a prominent but ignoble place), vanished with arrests for debt and similar unsatisfactory legal proceedings.

A supposed "dangerous" element in *Society* existed in the "Owl's Roost" scenes. Here Robertson drew the life of the little world he knew and loved, and in which he was a prime favourite,—the literary and theatrical "Bohemia" of his day, the land of which his companion, poor Geoffrey Prowse, affectionately wrote:—

"The longitude's rather uncertain,
The latitude's equally vague;
But that person I pity who knows not the city,
The beautiful city of Prague."

Robertson causes Sidney Daryl and Tom Stylus to

meet their comrades in the "Parlour of a Public-house," —and no doubt he had himself attended many festive gatherings in the old-fashioned and cosy taverns that used to exist in and about the Strand and Fleet Street where journalists and stage-folk were wont to congregate ; but he and his brother "Bohemians" had their clubs, too, such as the Arundel, the Reunion, and the Savage, and of one and all he was a welcome and prominent member. Such establishments were conducted on a more primitive scale then than they are now, and if their gatherings were a little less orderly, they were possibly more jovial. It was said that the scene in the "Owl's Roost," where the incident of borrowing the five shillings is so humourously introduced, was founded upon fact. However that may be, it is a very fair example of the way in which forty years ago the brethren of the pen and palette, sock and buskin, were ever ready to help one another to the very utmost of their slender means.

Oddly enough, the very thing that was dreaded as a danger proved an attraction.

The influential John Oxenford in his criticism in the *Times* wrote: "The scenes in which the 'Owls' figure are indeed the best in the piece, not only because they are extremely droll, but because they constitute a picture of the rank and file of literature and art, with all their attributes of fun, generosity, and *esprit de corps* painted in a kindly spirit. A report has reached us which, if true, is only the more absurd on that account, that some thin-skinned gentlemen have objected to these scenes as derogatory to the literary profession. Never was 'snobbery' more misplaced. The 'Owls' are emphatically described as 'good fellows,' who are unable to rise in the world and have nothing whatever to do with the men who are recognised as magnates of the republic of letters. If on Saturday

last the world learnt for the first time that there are still persons connected with literature and art who prefer grog to Clos Vongeoit, and 'long clays' to choice Havannahs, the world is in a state of appalling darkness, and a larger field is open to missionary enterprise than was ever anticipated even at Exeter Hall."

In speaking of Robertson, Mr. W. S. Gilbert has said: "I frequently attended his rehearsals and learnt a great deal from his method of stage-management, which in those days was quite a novelty, although most pieces are now stage-managed on the principles he introduced. I look upon stage-management, as now understood, as having been absolutely 'invented' by him."

To which Mr. John Hare, a master of this delicate and all-important part of modern theatrical art, adds, "My opinion of Robertson as a stage-manager is of the very highest. He had a gift peculiar to himself, and which I have never seen in any other author, of conveying by some rapid and almost electrical suggestion to the actor an insight into the character assigned to him. As nature was the basis of his own work, so he sought to make actors understand it should be theirs. He thus founded a school of natural acting which completely revolutionized the then existing methods, and by so doing did incalculable good to the stage."

Of course there were plenty of prejudiced people (and foremost amongst them were the actors who had been trained in the stilted old ways) to sneer at the new hand. They called it the "tea-cup-and-saucer" and "bread-and-butter" school; but it triumphed, and its influence has never diminished. Pinero and other prominent dramatists of to-day gladly own their indebtedness to Robertson, although they have groped farther along the intricate and thorn-set pathway that leads to perfection.

How he saw through and detested the old but — until the advent of Fechter and Sothorn — universally accepted style of acting cannot be better shown than by quoting from the footnotes appended by him to the manuscript of his comedy entitled *War*, in which he drew an English naval officer; a gallant French soldier; and a genial German merchant. Of the French Colonel de Rochevannes he said: "The Author requests this part may be played with a *slight* French accent. He is not to pronounce his words absurdly, or duck his head towards his stomach like the conventional stage Frenchman. Colonel de Rochevannes is to be played with the old pre-Revolutionary politeness, — knightly courtesy with a mixture of ceremony and *bonhomie*."

Of the German, Herr Karl Hartmann, he noted: "This part to be played with a slight German accent, and not to be made wilfully comic. Herr Karl Hartmann is to be a perfect gentleman, with a touch of the scholar and pedant in his manner — but always a gentleman."

And of Captain Sound, *R. N.*, he wrote: "Captain Sound is not to be dressed in uniform, but in the morning dress of a gentleman. His manner is to be hearty, but not rough; in every respect that of a captain of a man-of-war, and not of the master of a halfpenny steam-boat."

To the West End of London manager of to-day such author's directions would, of course, be deemed superfluous if not impertinent, but Robertson lived in different times, and knew from bitter experience what the dramatist might expect. How that experience was gained I have endeavoured in this brief introduction to show. The perception that enabled him to detect glaring faults and inconsistencies where others were content to accept recognised stage types can only be explained in the words *Poeta nascitur, non fit*.

Although it was written and acted as long ago as 1867, *Caste* still holds the stage, and seems likely to do so for many years to come. Of its revival in London in the spring of 1903 a keen critic said:—

“Of all Robertson’s plays *Caste*, it may be asserted with tolerable safety, is the only one likely to possess enduring vitality. Even *Caste*, however, begins to show signs of age in one direction. For, so far as the comic scenes and comic characterisation are concerned, the piece is manifestly and indubitably out of touch with present times. Sam Gerridge and Polly Eccles, the Marquise and old Eccles we can accept, perhaps, as interesting relics of a period when the duty of the stage to hold the mirror up to Nature was less freely recognised by dramatists than it is to-day; but as genuine types of humanity they have for us ceased to exist. The laughter they evoke, and unquestionably there is still amusement to be drawn from their doings, is rather that produced by a study of an early Victorian caricature than of some quaint portrait founded on genuine life and reality. Very good company they are, nevertheless, provided one is in the mood to acquiesce in the incongruities and exaggerations which serve to remove them from the sphere of actuality. But there is another standpoint judged from which *Caste* offers matter for reflection of a more satisfying description. The story of George D’Alroy’s love for Esther, of his sudden departure for the war, of his reported death, and of his return to find his wife mourning his loss, and himself the father of a boy, strikes to the root of true pathos, and can never grow stale or unimpressive while human nature remains what it is. This element it is which is destined to keep Robertson’s comedy alive and to insure it unfailing popularity with the public.”

Right though this judge is in the latter part of his sum-

ming up, he is wrong in the former. If he were as familiar as the writer of these lines happens to be with the English working-classes, he would know that in certain parts of London, and in every manufacturing town, you may jostle against a bustling Sam Gerridge at any street corner, and descry a loafing Eccles at the entrance of every public house — an Eccles who would pawn his very soul for drink, — who is the popular pot-house orator on the rights of the labouring man, and who declares, while he idles through his besotted days, that there is “Nothing like work — for the young. I don’t work so much as I used to myself, but I like to see the young ’uns at it. It does me good, and it does them good too.” He would learn, too, how an honest, hard-working, right-minded, albeit almost offensively plebeian Gerridge can hate and despise an Eccles. Yes, Eccles was drawn from the life, though the part was never acted to the life until it was undertaken by John Hare, — the original and most admirable interpreter of Sam Gerridge. The earlier representatives of Eccles were low comedians (very excellent ones), who, following traditional lines, created laughter out of comic drunkenness. Mr. Hare, with the instinct of a true artist, made him, without losing one ounce of comedy, a semi-pathetic picture of a man conscious of, and trying to conceal, a horrible infirmity. The new reading added a hundredfold to the characters of his distressed but still dutiful daughters. But how much there is in the acting of a character! Even the artificial and generally ultra-theatrical Marquise de St. Maur became a natural and sympathetic being when portrayed at the recent revival at the Haymarket Theatre by Miss Geneviève Ward.

From the date of the production of *Society*, the world-famous little Prince of Wales Theatre required no other author, and the brilliant series of comedies ran on with

undiminished prosperity until poor Robertson's untimely death brought them to an end. But the Bancrofts — Miss Marie Wilton soon changed her name for that by which she has been for so many years affectionately known — continued his good work, and it was to the part they took in the re-juvenescence of the English stage that they owe their well-won and worthily borne honours. In their happy retirement Sir Squire and Lady Bancroft, looking back at the past, its anxieties and labours, freely acknowledge that their first stepping-stone to fame and fortune was laid on the day when they bravely resolved to pin their faith on poor neglected Robertson.

T. EDGAR PEMBERTON.

THE TEXTS

Society is printed from the English acting edition published by Samuel French, which was taken from the prompt copy used by the Bancrofts and Robertson's son. It embodies, except for a few trivial exceptions which crept in at rehearsals, the original MS., dated Aug. 12, 1864, now in the Shakespeare Memorial Library at Stratford-on-Avon as a gift of the editor. *Caste* is reprinted from the English acting edition of French. The MS. is the property of Sir Squire and Lady Bancroft. The texts of the two plays printed in the *Principal Works of T. W. Robertson* (1889) vary slightly in punctuation and wording from the English acting editions. The variations probably did not originate with Robertson himself. The few of any significance are given in the Notes to the two plays. The American acting edition of *Caste*, evidently printed from a MS. surreptitiously obtained by W. J. Florence, markedly differs from the English edition in punctuation, thereby changing the meaning at times, omits, neglects dialect, and cuts out characteristic stage directions. The play is so clearly garbled that its variations from the English acting editions are not worth noting.

All existing editions are really for acting purposes, and are, therefore, thickly strewn with R., L., C., and other technical stage directions. Following the custom of Mr. Pinero and Mr. Jones in their published plays, the editor has, as far as possible, struck these out, for they would be an annoyance rather than a help to most readers. These elisions have made it necessary to change the wording and the punctuation slightly in some of the stage directions, and abbreviated names have been filled out, but no attempt has been made to soften the abruptness of phrasing. Without comment a few obvious errors in punctuation have been corrected and some stage directions placed at the beginning rather than the end of a speech. In numbering the lines, a speaker's name followed by a full line of stage direction is counted as a line.

The notes necessary for the two plays are so few that they have been placed together after the text of *Caste*.

Society

To
MY DEAR FRIEND
TOM HOOD
THIS PLAY
IS DEDICATED

SOCIETY

Produced at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, Liverpool (under the management of Mr A. Henderson), on May 8th, 1865; afterwards performed at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, London (under the management of Miss Marie Wilton), on November 11th, 1865.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

	<i>Liverpool</i>	<i>London</i>
LORD PTARMIGANT	<i>Mr. Blakeley</i>	<i>Mr. Hare</i>
LORD CLOUDWRAYS M. P.	<i>Mr. F. Cameron</i>	<i>Mr. Trafford</i>
SIDNEY DARYL (a Barrister)	<i>Mr. Edward Price</i>	<i>Mr. Bancroft</i>
MR. JOHN CHODD, SEN.	<i>Mr. G. P. Grainger</i>	<i>Mr. Ray</i>
MR. JOHN CHODD, JUN.	<i>Mr. L. Brough</i>	<i>Mr. J. Clarke</i>
TOM STYLUS	<i>Mr. E. Saker</i>	<i>Mr. F. Dewar</i>
O'SULLIVAN	<i>Mr. C. Swan</i>	<i>Mr. H. W. Montgomery</i>
MACUSQUEBAUGH	<i>Mr. Chater</i>	<i>Mr. Hill</i>
DOCTOR MAKVICZ	<i>Mr. Smith</i>	<i>Mr. Bennett</i>
BRADLEY	<i>Mr. W. Grainger</i>	<i>Mr. Parker</i>
SCARGIL	<i>Mr. Waller</i>	<i>Mr. Lawson</i>
SAM STUNNER P. R. (alias the Smiffel Lamb)	<i>Mr. Hill</i>	<i>Mr. J. Tindale</i>
SHAMHEART		<i>Mr. G. Odell</i>
DODDLES		<i>Mr. Burnett</i>
MOSES AARON (a balliff)	<i>Mr. Davidge</i>	<i>Mr. G. Atkins</i>
SHERIDAN TRODNON	<i>Mr. Bracewell</i>	<i>Mr. Macart</i>
LADY PTARMIGANT	<i>Miss Larkin</i>	<i>Miss Larkin</i>
MAUD HETHERINGTON	<i>Miss T. Furtado</i>	<i>Miss Marie Wilton</i>
LITTLE MAUD	<i>Miss F. Smithers</i>	<i>Miss George</i>
MRS. CHURTON	<i>Miss Procter</i>	<i>Miss Merton</i>
SERVANT		<i>Miss Thompson</i>

Act I. Scene 1. Sidney Daryl's Chambers. *Scene 2.* A West End Square.

Act II. Scene 1. A Parlour at the "Owl's Roost." *Scene 2.* A Retiring Room at Sir Farintosh Fadilcaf's.

Act III. Scene 1. Same as 1st Scene, Act II. *Scene 2.* An Apartment at Lord Ptarmigant's. *Scene 3.* Exterior at Springmead-le-Beau.

Society

ACT I

SCENE I. *Sydney Daryl's chambers, in Lincoln's Inn; set door-piece on each side (to double up and draw off); the room to present the appearance of belonging to a sporting literary barrister; books, pictures, whips; the mirror stuck full of cards (painted on cloth); a table, chairs, etc. As the curtain rises a knock heard, and Doddles discovered opening door at left.*

Tom (without). Mr. Daryl in?

Doddles. Not up yet.

Enter Tom Stylus, Chodd Jun. and Chodd Sen.

Chodd Jun. (looking at watch). Ten minutes to twelve, eh, guv?

Tom. Late into bed; up after he oughter; out 5
for brandy and sobering water.

Sidney (within). Doddles.

Dodd. (an old clerk). Yes, sir!

Sidney. Brandy and soda.

Dodd. Yes, sir.

Tom. I said so. Tell Mr. Daryl two gentle- 10
men wish to see him on particular business.

Chodd Jun. (*supercilious bad swell; glass in eye; booked stick; vulgar, and uneasy*). So this is an author's crib, is it? Don't think much of it, eh, 15
guy? *Crossing behind.*

Chodd Sen. (*a common old man, with a dialect*). Seems comfortable enough to me, Johnny.

Chodd Jun. Don't call me Johnny. I hope he won't be long. (*Looking at watch.*) Don't seem 20
to me the right sort of thing for two gentlemen to be kept waiting for a man they are going to employ.

Chodd Sen. Gently, Johnny. (*Chodd Jun. looks annoyed.*) I mean gently without the Johnny. 25
— Mister —

Tom. Daryl — Sidney Daryl.

Chodd Sen. Daryl didn't know as we was coming.

Chodd Jun. (*rudely to Tom*). Why didn't you 30
let him know?

Tom (*fiercely*). How the devil could I? I didn't see you till last night. (*Chodd Jun. retires into himself.*) You'll find Sidney Daryl just the man for you; young — full of talent — what I 35
was thirty years ago; I'm old now and not full of talent, if ever I was; I've emptied myself; I've missed my tip. You see I wasn't a swell — he is!

Chodd Jun. A swell — what, a man who writes for his living?

Doddles enters.

Dodd. Mr. Daryl will be with you directly; will you please to sit down?

Chodd Sen. sits. Tom takes chair by table; Chodd Jun., waiting to have one given to him, is annoyed that no one does so, and sits on table. Doddles goes round to left.

Chodd Jun. Where is Mr. Daryl?

Dodd. In his bath!

Chodd Jun. (*jumping off table*). What! You 45
don't mean to say he keeps us here while he's
washing himself?

Enter Sidney, in morning jacket.

Sidney. Sorry to have detained you; how are you, Tom?

Tom and Chodd Sen. rise; Chodd Jun. sits again on table and sucks cane.

Chodd Sen. Not at all. 50

Chodd Jun. (*with watch*). Fifteen minutes.

Sidney (*crossing, handing chair to Chodd Jun.*).
Take a chair.

Chodd Jun. This'll do.

Sidney. But you're sitting on the steel pens. 55

Tom. Dangerous things! pens.

Chodd Jun. takes chair.

Sidney. Yes! loaded with ink, percussion
powder's nothing to 'em.

Chodd Jun. We came here to talk business.
(*To Doddles.*) Here, you get out! 60

Sidney (*surprised*). Doddles — I expect a lot of people this morning, be kind enough to take them into the library.

Dodd. Yes, sir. (*Aside, looking at Chodd Jun.*)
Young rhinoceros! *Exit.* 65

Sidney. Now, gentlemen, — I am —

Crossing behind table.

Tom. Then I'll begin. First let me introduce Mr. Sidney Daryl to Mr. John Chodd, of Snoggerston, also to Mr. John Chodd Jun. of the same place; Mr. John Chodd of Snoggerston is very rich — he made a fortune by — 70

Chodd Sen. No — my brother Joe made the fortune in Australey, by gold digging and then spec'ulating; which he then died, and left all to me. 75

Chodd Jun. (aside). Guv! cut it!

Chodd Sen. I shan't, — I ain't ashamed of what I was, nor what I am; it never was my way. Well, sir, I have lots of brass.

Sidney. Brass? 80

Chodd Sen. Money.

Chodd Jun. Heaps!

Chodd Sen. Heaps; but having begun by being a poor man without edication, and not being a gentleman — 85

Chodd Jun. (aside). Guv ! cut it !

Chodd Sen. I shan't — I know I'm not, and I'm proud of it, that is, proud of knowing I'm not, and I won't pretend to be. Johnny, don't put me out — I say I'm not a gentleman, but 90 my son is.

Sidney (looking at him). Evidently.

Chodd Sen. And I wish him to cut a figure in the world — to get into Parliament.

Sidney. Very difficult. 95

Chodd Sen. To get a wife.

Sidney. Very easy.

Chodd Sen. And in short, to be a — a real gentleman.

Sidney. Very difficult. 100

Chodd Sen. } Eh ?

Chodd Jun. }

Sidney. I mean very easy.

Chodd Sen. Now, as I'm anxious he should be an M. P. as soon as —

Sidney. As he can. 105

Chodd Sen. Just so, and as I've lots of capital unemployed, I mean to invest it in —

Tom (slapping Sidney on knees). A new daily paper !

Sidney. By Jove ! 110

Chodd Sen. A cheap daily paper, that could — that will — What will a cheap paper do ?

Sidney. Bring the "Court Circular" within the knowledge of the humblest.

Tom. Educate the masses — raise them morally, socially, politically, scientifically, geologically, and horizontally.

Chodd Sen. (delighted). That's it — that's it, only it looks better in print.

Tom (spouting). Bring the glad and solemn tidings of the day to the labourer at his plough — the spinner at his wheel — the swart forger at his furnace — the sailor on the giddy mast — the lighthouse keeper as he trims his beacon lamp — the housewife at her pasteboard — the mother at her needle — the lowly lucifer seller, as he splashes his wet and weary way through the damp, steaming, stony streets, eh? you know.

Slapping Sidney on knee. Both laugh.

Chodd Sen. (to Chodd Jun.). What are they laughing at?

130

Tom. So my old friend, Johnny Prothero, who lives hard by Mr. Chodd, knowing that I have started lots of papers, sent the two Mr. Chodds — or the Messrs. Chodd — which is it? — you're a great grammarian — to me. I can find them an efficient staff, and you are the first man we've called upon.

Sidney. Thanks, old fellow. When do you propose to start it?

Chodd Sen. At once.

140

Sidney. What is it to be called?

Chodd Sen. We don't know.

Chodd Jun. We leave that to the fellows we pay for their time and trouble.

Sidney. You want something —

145

Chodd Sen. Strong.

Tom. And sensational.

Sidney. I have it.

Rising.

Tom.

Chodd Sen. } What?

Chodd Jun. }

Sidney. The "Morning Earthquake"!

150

Tom. Capital!

Chodd Sen. (rising). First-rate!

Chodd Jun. (still seated). Not so bad.

Goes up during next speech.

Sidney. Don't you see? In place of the clock, a mass of houses, factories, and palaces tumbling one over the other; and then the prospectus! "At a time when thrones are tottering, dynasties dissolving — while the old world is displacing to make room for the new —"

Tom. Bravo!

160

Chodd Sen. (enthusiastically). Hurray!

Tom. A second edition at 4 o'clock p. m. The "Evening Earthquake," eh? Placard the walls. "The Earthquake," one note of admi-

ration; "The Earthquake," two notes of admira- 165
tion; "The Earthquake," three notes of admira-
tion. Posters: "The Earthquake delivered
every morning with your hot rolls." "With coffee,
toast and eggs, enjoy your Earthquake."

Chodd Sen. (with pocket-book). I've got your 170
name and address.

*Chodd Jun. (who has been looking at cards stuck in
glass).* Guv.

Takes old Chodd up stage and whispers to him.

Tom (to Sidney). Don't like this young man.

Sidney. No.

175

Tom. Cub.

Sidney. Cad.

Tom. Never mind. The old un's not a bad
'un. We're off to a printer's.

Sidney. Good-by, Tom, and thank ye.

180

Tom. How's the little girl?

Sidney. Quite well. I expect her here this
morning.

Chodd Sen. Good-morning.

Exeunt Chodd Sen. and Tom.

Sidney (filling pipe, etc.). Have a pipe?

185

Chodd Jun. (taking out a magnificent case). I al-
ways smoke cigars.

Sidney. Gracious creature! Have some bitter
beer?

Getting it from locker.

Chodd Jun. I never drink anything in the 190
morning.

Sidney. Oh!

Chodd Jun. But champagne.

Sidney. I haven't got any.

Chodd Jun. Then I'll take beer. (*They sit.*) 195
Business is business — so I'd best begin at once. The present age is — as you are aware — a practical age. I come to the point — it's my way. Capital commands the world. The capitalist commands capital, therefore the capitalist 200 commands the world.

Sidney. But you don't quite command the world, do you?

Chodd Jun. Practically I do. I wish for the highest honours — I bring out my cheque-book. 205 I want to go into the House of Commons — cheque-book. I want the best legal opinion in the House of Lords — cheque-book. The best house — cheque-book. The best turn-out — cheque-book. The best friends, the best wife, 210 the best-trained children — cheque-book, cheque-book, and cheque-book.

Sidney. You mean to say with money you can purchase anything?

Chodd Jun. Exactly. This life is a matter 215 of bargain.

Sidney. But "honour, love, obedience, troops of friends"?

Chodd Jun. Can buy 'em all, sir, in lots, as at an auction. 220

Sidney. Love, too?

Chodd Jun. Marriage means a union mutually advantageous. It is a civil contract, like a partnership.

Sidney. And the old-fashioned virtues of honour and chivalry?

Chodd Jun. Honour means not being bankrupt. I know nothing at all about chivalry, and I don't want to.

Sidney. Well, yours is quite a new creed to me, and I confess I don't like it.

Chodd Jun. The currency, sir, converts the most hardened sceptic. I see by the cards on your glass that you go out a great deal.

Sidney. Go out? 235

Chodd Jun. Yes, to parties. (*Looking at cards on table.*) There's my Lady this, and the Countess t'other, and Mrs. Somebody else. Now, that's what I want to do.

Sidney. Go into society? 240

Chodd Jun. Just so. You had money once, hadn't you?

Sidney. Yes.

Chodd Jun. What did you do with it?

Sidney. Spent it. 245

Chodd Jun. And you've been in the army?

Sidney. Yes.

Chodd Jun. Infantry?

Sidney. Cavalry.

Chodd Jun. Dragoons ?

250

Sidney. Lancers.

Chodd Jun. How did you get out ?

Sidney. Sold out.

Chodd Jun. Then you were a first-rate fellow,
till you tumbled down ?

255

Sidney. Tumbled down ?

Chodd Jun. Yes, to what you are.

*Sidney, about to speak, is interrupted by
Moses Aaron, without.*

Moses (without). Tell him, I musht shee him.

Enter Moses Aaron with Doddles.

Moses (not seeing Chodd Jun., going round behind
table). Sorry, Mister Daryl, but at the shoot of
Brackersby and Co.

Arrests him.

Chodd Jun. Je — hosophat !

Rising.

Sidney. Confound Mr. Brackersby ! It hasn't
been owing fifteen months. How much ?

Moses. With exes, fifty-four pun' two.

265

Sidney. I've got it in the next room. Have
some beer ?

Moses. Thank ye, shir.

Sidney pours it out.

Sidney. Back directly.

Exit.

Chodd Jun. This chap's in debt. Here you !

270

Moses. Shir ?

Chodd Jun. Mr. Daryl — does he owe much ?

Moses. Shpeck he does, shir, or I shouldn't know him.

Chodd Fun. Here's half a sov. Give me your address. 275

Moses (gives card). "Orders executed with punctuality and despatch."

Chodd Fun. If I don't get into society now I'm a Dutchman. 280

Enter Sidney.

Sidney. Here you are — ten fives — two two's — and a half-crown for yourself.

Moses. Thank ye, shir. Good-morning, shir.

Sidney. Good-morning.

Moses (to Chodd Fun). Good-morning, shir. 285

Chodd Fun. Such familiarity from the lower orders! (*Exit Moses Aaron.*) You take it coolly.

Sitting at table.

Sidney (sitting). I generally do.

Chodd Fun. (looking round). You've got lots of guns. 290

Sidney. I'm fond of shooting.

Chodd Fun. And rods.

Sidney. I'm fond of fishing.

Chodd Fun. And books.

Sidney. I like reading. 295

Chodd Fun. And whips.

Sidney. And riding.

Chodd Fun. Why, you seem fond of everything.

Sidney (looking at him). No, not everything. 300

Doddles enters with card.

Sidney (reading). "Mr. Sam Stunner P. R."

Chodd Jun. "P. R."? What's "P. R." mean? Afternoon's P. M.

Sidney. Ask him in. *Exit Doddles.*

Chodd Jun. Is he an author? or does P. R. 305 mean Pre-Raphaelite?

Sidney. No; he's a prize-fighter — the Smiffel Lamb.

Enter the Smiffel Lamb.

How are you, Lamb?

Lamb. Bleating, sir, bleating — thank ye 310 kindly.

Chodd Jun. (aside to Sidney). Do prize-fighters usually carry cards?

Sidney. The march of intellect. Education of the masses, — the Jemmy Masseys. Have a 315 glass of sherry.

Lamb. Not a drain, thankee sir.

Chodd Jun. (aside). Offers that brute sherry, and makes me drink beer!

Lamb. I've jist been drinking with Lankey 320 Joe, and the Dulwich Duffer, at Sam Shoulder-blows. I'm a goin' into trainin' next week to fight Australian Harry, the Boundin' Kangaroo. I shall lick him, sir. I know I shall.

Sidney. I shall back you, Lamb. 325

Lamb. Thankee, Mr. Daryl. I knew you would. I always does my best for my backers, and to keep up the honour of the science; the Fancy, sir, should keep square. (*Looks at Chodd Jun., hesitates, then walks to door, closes it, and walks sharply up to Sidney Daryl— Chodd Jun. leaping up in alarm, and retiring to back— leaning on table and speaking close to Daryl's ear.*) I jist called in to 330 give you the office, sir, as has always been so kind to me, not to put any tin on the mill between the Choking Chummy and Slang's Novice. It's a cross, sir, a reg'lar barney.

Sidney. Is it? Thank ye.

335

Lamb. That's what I called for, sir; and now I'm hoff. (*Goes to door. Turning.*) Don't putt a mag on it, sir — Choking Chummy is a cove as would sell his own mother; he once sold me, which is wuss. Good-day, sir.

340

Exit Lamb. Chodd Jun. reseats himself.

Chodd Jun. As I was saying, you know lots of people at clubs and in society.

Sidney. Yes.

Chodd Jun. Titles, and Honourables, and Captains, and that.

345

Sidney. Yes.

Chodd Jun. Tip-toppers. (*After a pause.*) You're not well off?

Sidney (getting serious). No.

Chodd Jun. I am. I've heaps of brass. Now ³⁵⁰
I have what you haven't, and I haven't what
you have. You've got what I want. That's
logic, isn't-it?

Sidney (gravely). What of it?

Chodd Jun. This; suppose we exchange or ³⁵⁵
barter. You help me to get into the company
of men with titles, and women with titles; swells,
you know, real 'uns, and all that.

Sidney. Yes.

Chodd Jun. And I'll write you a cheque for ³⁶⁰
any reasonable sum you like to name.

Sidney rises indignantly, at the same moment

Little Maud and Mrs. Churton enter.

Little Maud (running to Sidney). Here I am,
uncle; Mrs. Churton says I've been such a
good girl.

Sidney (kissing her). My darling. How d'ye ³⁶⁵
do, Mrs. Churton. (*To Little Maud.*) I've got a
waggon and a baalamb that squeaks for you.
(*Then to Chodd.*) Mr. Chodd, I cannot entertain
your very commercial proposition. My friends
are my friends; they are not marketable com- ³⁷⁰
modities. I regret that I can be of no assistance
to you. With your appearance, manners, and
cheque-book, you are sure to make a circle of
your own.

Chodd Jun. You refuse, then —

Sidney. Absolutely. Good-morning.

Chodd Jun. Good-morning. (*Aside.*) And if I don't have my knife into you, my name's not John Chodd, Jun.

Exeunt Sidney, Little Maud, and Mrs. Churton on one side, Chodd Jun. on the other.

SCENE II. *The Interior of a Square in the West End. Weeping ash over a rustic chair centre; trees, shrubs, walks, rails, gates, etc.; houses at back. Time evening — effect of setting sun in windows of houses; lights in some of the windows, etc.; street lamps. Maud discovered in rustic chair, reading; street band heard playing in the distance.*

Maud. I can't see to read any more. Heigh-ho! how lonely it is! and that band makes me so melancholy — sometimes music makes me feel — (*Rising.*) Heigh-ho! I suppose I shall see nobody to-night; I must go home. (*Starts.*) Oh! 5
(*Sidney appears at left gate.*) I think I can see to read a few more lines. *Sits again and takes book.*

Sidney (feeling pockets). Confound it! I've left the key at home. (*Tries gate.*) How shall I get in? (*Looking over rails.*) I'll try the other. 10

Goes round at back to opposite gate.

Maud. Why, he's going! He doesn't know I'm here. (*Rises, calling.*) Sid — No, I won't, the idea of his — (*Sees Sidney at gate.*) Ah!

Gives a sigh of relief, reseats herself and reads.

Sidney (at gate). Shut, too! (*Trying gate.*)
Provoking! What shall I — (*Seeing Nursemaid 15*
approaching with child — drops his hat into square.)
Will you kindly open this? — I've forgotten
my key. (*Girl opens gate.*) Thanks! (*Sidney*
enters square; Girl and child go out at gate; Life
Guardsmen enters and speaks to Girl; they exeunt.
Sidney sighs on seeing Maud.) There she is!
(*Sits himself by Maud.*) Maud!

Maud (starting). Oh! is that you? Who 20
would have thought of seeing you here!

Sidney. Oh come — don't I know that you
walk here after dinner? and all day long I've
been wishing it was half-past eight.

Maud (coquetting). I wonder, now, how often 25
you've said that this last week?

Sidney. Don't pretend to doubt me, — that's
unworthy of you. (*A pause.*) Maud?

Maud. Yes?

Sidney. Are you not going to speak? 30

Maud (dreamily). I don't know what to say.

Sidney. That's just my case. When I'm
away from you I feel I could talk to you for
hours; but when I'm with you, somehow or
other, it seems all to go away. (*Getting closer to 35*
her and taking her hand.) It is such happiness to
be with you, that it makes me forget everything
else. (*Takes off his gloves and puts them on seat.*)

Ever since I was that high, in the jolly old days down at Springmead, my greatest pleasure has 40
been to be near you. (*Looks at watch.*) Twenty to nine. When must you return?

Maud. At nine.

Sidney. Twenty minutes. How's your aunt?

Maud. As cross as ever. 45

Sidney. And Lord Ptarmigan?

Maud. As usual — asleep.

Sidney. Dear old man! — how he does doze away his time. (*Another pause.*) Anything else to tell me? 50

Maud. We had such a stupid dinner; such odd people.

Sidney. Who?

Maud. Two men by the name of Chodd.

Sidney (*uneasily*). Chodd? 55

Maud. Isn't it a funny name — Chodd?

Sidney. Yes, it's a Chodd name — I mean an odd name. Where were they picked up?

Maud. I don't know. Auntie says they are both very rich. 60

Sidney (*uneasily*). She thinks of nothing but money. (*Looks at watch.*) Fifteen to nine. (*Stage has grown gradually dark.*) Maud!

Maud (*in a whisper*). Yes?

Sidney. If I were rich — if you were rich — 65
if we were rich.

Maud. Sidney ! *Drawing closer to him.*

Sidney. As it is, I almost feel it's a crime to love you.

Maud. Oh, Sidney. 70

Sidney. You, who might make such a splendid marriage.

Maud. If you had money — I couldn't care for you any more than I do now.

Sidney. My darling ! (*Looks at watch.*) Ten minutes. I know you wouldn't. Sometimes I feel mad about you, mad when I know you are out a smiling upon others — and — and waltzing. 75

Maud. I can't help waltzing when I'm asked.

Sidney. No, dear, no ; but when I fancy you are spinning round with another's arm about your waist — (*his arm round her waist.*) Oh ! I feel — 80

Maud. Why, Sidney (*smiling*), you are jealous !

Sidney. Yes, I am. 85

Maud. Can't you trust me ?

Sidney. Implicitly. But I like to be with you all the same.

Maud (*whispering*). So do I with you.

Sidney. My love ! (*Kisses her, and looks at watch.*) Five minutes. 90

Maud. Time to go ?

Sidney. No ! (*Maud, in taking out her handkerchief, takes out a knot of ribbons.*) What's that ?

Maud. Some trimmings I'm making for our 95
fancy fair.

Sidney. What colour is it? Scarlet?

Maud. Magenta.

Sidney. Give it to me?

Maud. What nonsense!

100

Sidney. Won't you?

Maud. I've brought something else.

Sidney. For me?

Maud. Yes.

Sidney. What?

105

Maud. These.

Producing small case which Sidney opens.

Sidney. Sleeve-links!

Maud. Now, which will you have, the links
or the ribbon?

Sidney (after reflection). Both.

110

Maud. You avaricious creature!

Sidney (putting the ribbons near his heart). It's not
in the power of words to tell you how I love
you. Do you care for me enough to trust your
future with me — will you be mine?

115

Maud. Sidney?

Sidney. Mine, and none other's; no matter
how brilliant the offer — how dazzling the posi-
tion?

Maud (in a whisper, leaning towards him). Yours 120
and yours only!

Clock strikes nine.

Sidney (with watch). Nine! Why doesn't time stop, and big Ben refuse to toll the hour?

Lady and Lord Ptarmigan appear and open gate at right.

Maud (frightened). My aunt!

Sidney gets to back round left of square.

Lord and Lady Ptarmigan advance.

Lady Ptarmigan (a very grand, acid old lady). 125
Maud!

Maud. Aunt, I was just coming away.

Lady P. No one in the square? Quite improper to be here alone. Ferdinand?

Lord Ptarmigan (a little old gentleman). My 130
love?

Lady P. What is the time?

Lord P. Don't know — watch stopped — tired of going, I suppose, like me.

Lady P. (sitting on chair — throws down gloves 135 left by Sidney with her dress). What's that?

(Picking them up.) Gloves?

Maud (frightened). Mine, aunty.

Lady P. Yours! You've got yours on!
(Looking at them.) These are Sidney Daryl's. I 140
know his size, — seven-and-a-half. I see why you are so fond of walking in the square; for shame! *(Turning to Sidney, who has just got the gate open, and is going out.)* Sidney! *(Fiercely.)* I see you! There is no occasion to try and sneak 145

away. Come here. (*Sidney advances. With ironical politeness.*) You have left your gloves.

All are standing except Lord Ptarmigan, who lies at full length on chair and goes to sleep.

Sidney (confused). Thank you, Lady Ptarm —

Lady P. You two fools have been making love. I've long suspected it. I'm shocked with 150 both of you; a penniless scribbler, and a dependent orphan, without a shilling or an expectation. Do you (*to Sidney*) wish to drag my niece, born and bred a lady, to a back parlour, and bread and cheese? Or do you (*to Maud*) wish 155 to marry a shabby writer, who can neither feed himself nor you? I can leave you nothing, for I am as well bred a pauper as yourselves. (*To Maud.*) To keep appointments in a public square! your conduct is disgraceful — worse — 160 it is unladylike; and yours (*to Sidney*) is dishonourable, and unworthy, to fill the head of a foolish girl with sentiment and rubbish. (*Loudly.*) Ferdinand!

Lord P. (waking up). Yes, dear? 165

Lady P. Do keep awake; the Chodds will be here directly; they are to walk home with us, and I request you to make yourself agreeable to them.

Lord P. Such canaille!

170

Lady P. Such cash!

Lord P. Such cads!

Lady P. Such cash! Pray, Ferdinand, don't argue. *Authoritatively.*

Lord P. I never do. *Goes to sleep again.* 175

Lady P. I wish for no *ésclandre*. Let us have no discussion in the square. Mr. Daryl, I shall be sorry if you compel me to forbid you my house. I have other views for Miss Hetherington. *Sidney bows.* 180

The two Chodds, in evening dress enter.

Lady P. My dear Mr. Chodd, Maud has been so impatient. (*The Chodds do not see Sidney. To Chodd Sen.*) I shall take your arm, Mr. Chodd. (*Very sweetly.*) Maud dear, Mr. John will escort you. 185

Street band heard playing "Fra Poco" in distance; Maud takes Chodd Jun.'s arm; the two couples go off; as Maud turns, she looks an adieu at Sidney, who waves the bunch of ribbon, and sits down on chair in a reverie, not perceiving Lord Ptarmigan's legs; Lord Ptarmigan jumps up with pain; Sidney apologises.

Curtain quick.

END OF ACT I

ACT II

SCENE I. *Parlour at the "Owl's Roost."* Public bouse. Cushioned seats all round the apartment; gas lighted on each side over tables; splint boxes, pipes, newspapers, etc., on table; writing materials on table (near door); gong bell on another table; door of entrance centre; clock above door (hands set to half-past nine); bat pegs and bats on walls. In chair at table head on the left is discovered O'Sullivan; also, in the following order, Mac-Usquebaugh, Author, and Dr. Makvicz; also at the other table Trodnon (at head), Shambeart, Bradley, Scargil; the Reporter of "*Belgravian Banner*" is sitting near the head of the first table, and with his back turned to it, smoking a cigar. The Characters are all discovered drinking and smoking, some reading, some with their bats on.

Omnes. Bravo! Hear, hear! Bravo!

O'Sullivan (*on his legs, a glass in one hand, and terminating a speech, in Irish accent*). It is, therefore, gentlemen, with the most superlative felicitee, the most fraternal convivialitee, the warmest congenialitee, the most burning friendship, and ardent admiration, that I propose his health!

Omnes. Hear, hear! etc.

O'Sull. He is a man, in the words of the di- 10
vine bard —

Trodon (in sepulchral voice). Hear! Hear!

O'Sull. Who, in "suffering everything, has
suffered nothing."

Trod. Hear, hear!

15

O'Sull. I have known him when, in the days
of his prosperitee, he rowled down to the House
of Commons in his carriage.

Mac Usquebaugh. 'Twasn't his own, — 'twas
a job.

20

Omnes. Silence! Chair! Order!

O'Sull. I have known him when his last
copper, and his last glass of punch, has been
shared with the frind of his heart.

Omnes. Hear, hear!

25

O'Sull. And it is with feelings of no small
pride that I inform ye that that frind of his heart
was the humble individual who has now the
honour to address ye!

Omnes. Hear, hear! etc.

30

O'Sull. But, prizeman at Trinity, mimber of
the bar, sinator, classical scholar, or frind, Des-
mind MacUsquebaugh has always been the same
— a gintleman and a scholar — that highest type
of that glorious union — an Irish gintleman and 35
scholar. Gintlemen, I drink his health — Des-
mond, my long loved frind, bless ye! (*All rise*

solemnly and drink—"Mr. MacUsquebaugh.") Gintlemen, my frind, Mr. MacUsquebaugh, will respond.

40

Omnes. Hear, hear!

Enter Waiter, with glasses, tobacco, etc., and receives orders—changes O'Sullivan's glass and exit. Enter Tom Stylus and Chodd Jun. Tom has a greatcoat on, over evening dress.

Chodd Jun. Thank you; no, not anything.

Tom. Just a wet—an outrider—or advanced guard, to prepare the way for the champagne.

45

Chodd Jun. No.

As soon as the sitters see Tom Stylus they give him a friendly nod, looking inquiringly at Chodd and whisper each other.

Tom. You'd better. They are men worth knowing. (*Pointing them out.*) That is the celebrated Olinthus O'Sullivan, Doctor of Civil Laws.

50

O'Sullivan is at this moment reaching to the gas-light to light his pipe.

Chodd Jun. The gent with the long pipe?

Tom. Yes: one of the finest classical scholars in the world: might have sat upon the woolsack, if he'd chosen, but he didn't. (*O'Sullivan is now tossing with MacUsquebaugh.*) That is the famous Desmond MacUsquebaugh, late M. P. for Kill-

55

crackskullcuddy, county Galway, a great patriot and orator; might have been Chancellor of the Exchequer if he'd chosen, but he didn't. (*Scargil reaches to the gas-light to light his pipe.*) That's 60
Bill Bradley (*pointing to Bradley, who is reading paper with double eyeglass*), author of the famous romance of "Time and Opportunity"; ran through ten editions. He got two thousand pounds for it, which was his ruin. 65

Chodd Jun. How was he ruined by getting two thousand pounds?

Tom. He's never done anything since. We call him "one book Bradley." That gentleman fast asleep — (*looking towards Author at table*) has 70
made the fortune of three publishers, and the buttoned-up one with the shirt front of beard, is Herr Makvicz, the great United German. Dr. Scargil, there, discovered the mensuration of the motive power of the cerebral organs. 75

Scargil takes a pinch of snuff from a box on the table.

Chodd Jun. What's that?

Tom. How many million miles per minute thought can travel. He might have made his fortune if he'd chosen.

Chodd Jun. But he didn't. Who is that mild- 80
looking party, with the pink complexion, and the white hair? *Looking towards Shambheart.*

Tom. Sam Shamheart, the professional philanthropist. He makes it his business and profit to love the whole human race. (*Shamheart puffs a huge cloud of smoke from his pipe.*) Smoke, sir; all smoke. A superficial observer would consider him only a pleasant oily humbug, but I, having known him two and twenty years, feel qualified to pronounce him one of the biggest villains 90 untransported.

Chodd Jun. And that man asleep at the end of the table?

Tom. Trodnon, the eminent tragedian.

Trodnon raises himself from the table, yawns, stretches himself, and again drops head on table.

Chodd Jun. I never heard of him. 95

Tom. Nor anybody else. But he's a confirmed tippler, and here we consider drunkenness an infallible sign of genius — we make that a rule.

Chodd Jun. But if they are all such great men, why didn't they make money by their 100 talents?

Tom. Make money! They'd scorn it! they wouldn't do it — that's another rule. That gentleman there (*looking towards a very seedy man with eyeglass in his eye*) does the evening parties on the 105 "Belgravian Banner."

Chodd Jun. (*with interest*). Does he? Will

he put my name among the fashionables to-night?

Tom. Yes.

110

Chodd Jun. And that we may know who's there and everything about it — your going with me?

Tom. Yes. I'm going into *society*; thanks to your getting me the invitation. I can dress up an account, not a mere list of names, but a picturesque report of the *soirée*, and show under what brilliant auspices you entered the *beau-monde*.

Chodd Jun. *Beau-monde*? What's that?

Tom (*chaffing him*). Every man is called a cockney who is born within the sound of the *beau-monde*.

Chodd Jun. (*not seeing it*). Oh! Order me two hundred copies of the "*Belgravian*" — What's its name?

125

Tom. "*Banner*."

Chodd Jun. The day my name's in it — and put me down as a regular subscriber. I like to encourage high-class literature. By the way, shall I ask the man what he'll take to drink?

130

Tom. No, no.

Chodd Jun. I'll pay for it. I'll stand, you know.

Going to him, Tom stops him.

Tom. No, no, — he don't know you, and he'd be offended.

135

Chodd Jun. But I suppose all these chaps are plaguey poor?

Tom. Yes, they're poor; but they are gentlemen.

Chodd Jun. (grinning). I like that notion — 140
a poor gentleman — it tickles me. *Going up.*

Tom. (crossing into left corner). Metallic snob!

Chodd Jun. I'm off now. (*Going up.*) You'll come to my rooms and we'll go together in the brougham. I want to introduce you to my 145
friends, Lady Ptarmigan and Lord Ptarmigan.

Tom. I must wait here for a proof I expect from the office.

Chodd Jun. How long shall you be?

Tom. (looking at clock). An hour.

150

Chodd Jun. Don't be later.

Exit Chodd Jun. The Reporter rises, gets paper from table at left, and shows it to Shamheart, sitting next him on his left hand.

O'Sull. Sit down, Tommy, my dear boy. Gintlemen, Mr. Desmond MacUsquebaugh will respond.

Tapping with hammer. Enter Waiter and gives Bradley a glass of grog.

Mac U. (rising). Gintlemen.

155

Tom, taking his coat off, shows evening dress.

Tom. A go of whiskey.

Waiter. Scotch or Irish?

Tom. Irish.

Exit Waiter. All are astonished at Tom's costume. They cry, "By Jove! there's a swell!" etc.

O'Sull. Why, Tom, my dear friend — are ye going to be married to-night, that ye're got up 160 so gorgeously?

Mac U. Tom, you're handsome as an angel.

O'Sull. Or a duke's footman. Gintlemen, rise and salute our illustrious brother.

All rise and make Tom mock bows.

Bradley. The gods preserve you, noble sir. 165

Sham. May the bill of your sublime high-ness's washerwoman be never the less.

Mac U. And may it be paid. *A general laugh.*

O'Sull. Have you come into a fortune?

Dr. Makvicz. Or married a widow? 170

Sham. Or buried a relation? (*A general laugh.*)

By my soul, Tom, you look an honour to humanity.

O'Sull. And your laundress. *A general laugh.*

Brad. Gentlemen, Mr. Stylus's health and 175 shirt-front. *A general laugh. All drink and sit.*

Tom. Bless ye, my people, bless ye.

Sits and takes out short pipe and smokes.

O'Sull. Gintlemen, (*rising*) my frind, Mr. Usquebaugh, will respond.

Omnes. Hear, hear !

180

Mac U. (*rising*). Gentlemen —

Enter Sidney in evening dress and wrapper. Enter Waiter with Tom's grog.

Omnes. Hallo, Daryl !

Sidney. How are ye, boys ? Doctor, how goes it ? (*Shaking hands.*) *Mac.* How d'ye do, O'Sullivan ? Tom, I want to speak to you.

185

O'Sull. Ah, Tom, this is the rale metal — the genuine thing ; compared to him you are a sort of Whitechapel would-if-I-could-be. (*To Sidney.*) Sit down, my gorgeous one, and drink with me.

190

Sidney. No, thanks.

Sidney and Tom sit at table head near door.

O'Sull. Waiter, take Mr. Daryl's orders.

Sidney. Brandy cold.

Exit Waiter.

Mac U. Take off your wrap, rascal, and show your fine feathers.

195

Sidney. No ; I am going out, and I shall smoke my coat.

Tom extinguishes his pipe and puts it in his dress-coat pocket, then puts on his great-coat with great solemnity.

O'Sull. Going ?

Tom. No.

O'Sull. Got the rheumatism ?

200

Tom. No; but I shall smoke my coat.

General laugh.

Enter Waiter. He gives glass of brandy and water to Sidney, and glass of grog to Shamheart.

O'Sull. What news, Daryl?

Sidney. None, except that the Ministry is to be defeated.

O'Sullivan pays Waiter.

All. No!

205

Sidney. I say, yes. They're whipping up everything to vote against Thunder's motion. Thunder is sure of a majority, and out they go. Capital brandy. (*Coming forward.*) Tom! (*Tom rises; they come down stage.*) I am off to a soirée. 210

Tom (*aside*). So am I; but I won't tell him.

Sidney. I find I've nothing in my portmonnaie but notes. I want a trifle for a cab. Lend me five shillings.

215

Tom. I haven't got it, but I can get it for you.

Sidney. There's a good fellow, do.

Returns to seat.

Tom (*to MacUsquebaugh, after looking around*).

Mac, (*whispering*) lend me five bob.

220

MacU. My dear boy, I haven't got so much.

Tom. Then don't lend it.

MacU. But I'll get it for you. (*Crosses to*

Bradley — whispers.) Bradley, lend me five shillings.

Brad. I haven't it about me, but I'll get it for you. (*Crosses to O' Sullivan — whispers.*) O'Sullivan, lend me five shillings. 225

O'Sull. I haven't got it, but I'll get it for you. (*Crosses to Scargil — whispers.*) Scargil, lend me five shillings. 230

Scarg. I haven't got it, but I'll get it for you. (*Crossing to Makvicz — whispers.*) Doctor, lend me five shillings.

Dr. M. I am waiting vor change vor a zov-235
eren; I'll give it you when the waiter brings it to me.

Scarg. All right! (*To O' Sullivan.*) All right!

O'Sull. All right! (*To Bradley.*) All right!

Brad. All right! (*To Mac Usquebaugh.*) All right! 240

Mac U. All right! (*To Tom.*) All right!

Tom (to Sidney). All right!

O'Sull. (tapping). Gintlemen, my friend, Mr. MacUsquebaugh will respond to the toast 245
that —

Mac U. (rising). Gintlemen —

Sidney. Oh, cut the speechifying, I hate it. You ancients are so fond of spouting; let's be jolly, I've only a few minutes more. 250

Brad. Daryl, sing us "Cock-a-doodle-doo."

Sidney. I only know the first two verses.

Tom. I know the rest.

Enter Waiter. Gives glass of grog to Makvicz.

Sidney. Then here goes. Waiter, shut the door, and don't open it till I've done. Now ²⁵⁵ then, ready. *Exit Waiter. O'Sullivan taps.*

Sidney (giving out). Political : —

(Sings) When Ministers in fear and doubt,
That they should be from place kicked out,
Get up 'gainst time and sense to spout 260
A long dull evening through,
What mean they then by party clique,
Mob orators and factions weak ?
'Tis only would they truth then speak
But cock-a-doodle-do ! 265
Cock-a-doodle, cock-a-doodle, cock-a-doodle-
doo.

Chorus (gravely and solemnly shaking their beads).
Cock-a-doodle, etc.

Sidney (speaking). Commercial : —

(Sings) When companies, whose stock of cash 270
Directors spend to cut a dash,
Are formed to advertise and smash,
And bankruptcy go through ;

269 *Commercial.* The Ms. here reads : Journalism : —

When papers speak with puff and praise,
Of things and people nowadays,
Of rings, quack medicine, railroads, plays,
Of laws, inventions new ;
Alliterative words and fuss,
Big adjectives, terms curious,
Sound, fury, what's all this tous
But Cock-a-doodle-doo ! "

When tradesfolk live in regal state,
The goods they sell adulterate, 275
And puff in print, why what's their prate
But-cock-a-doodle-doo ?
Cock-a-doodle, cock-a-doodle, etc.

Chorus (as before). Cock-a-doodle, etc.

Enter Waiter.

O Sull. How dare you come in and interrupt 280
the harmony ?

Waiter. Beg pardon, sir, but there's somebody says as he must see Mr. Stylus.

Tom. Is he a devil ?

Waiter. No, sir, he's a juvenile. 285

A general laugh.

Tom. Send in some whiskey — Irish — and the devil.

Waiter. Hot, sir? *A general laugh.*

Tom nods to Waiter, who exits.

Sidney. Why can't you see your proofs at the office ? 290

Tom. I'm in full fig, and can't stew in that atmosphere of steam and copperas.

Enter Printer's Boy; he goes up to Tom at head of table. Enter Waiter, with tray, hot-water jug, etc.; he gives change in silver to Makvicz, who crosses to Scargil. Waiter puts hot-water jug and whiskey before Tom, and exits.

Dr. M. Here ! (*Giving two half-crowns to Scargil.*) Scargil !

Scarg. (*crossing in same manner to O'Sullivan*). 295
Here, O'Sullivan!

O'Sull. (*crossing to Bradley*). Here, Bradley.

Brad. (*crossing to MacUsquebaugh*). Here, Mac.

MacU. (*crossing to Tom*). Here, Tom.

Printer's Boy (*to Tom*). Please sir, Mr. Duval 300
said would you add this to it?

Giving Tom a proof-slip.

Tom. All right — wait outside — I'll bring it
to you. *Exit Boy.*

Tom (*draws writing pad towards him, takes his
grog, and is about to pour hot water from pewter jug
into it, when he burns his fingers, starts up and dances*).
Confound it! 305

All. What's the matter?

Tom. I've scalded my fingers with hot water.

Sidney (*taking up pen*). Here, I'll correct it for
you.

Tom. Thank you. 310

O'Sull. Gentlemen, proceed with the harmony.

Mr. Stylus —

Tom. One minute. (*To Sidney*.) Just add this
to it. (*Sidney sits down to write, Tom standing over
him, reading slip*.) "Fashionable Intelligence — 315
We hear a marriage is on the tapis between Mr.
John Chodd Jun., son of the celebrated million-
aire, and Miss Maud Hetherington, daughter of
the late Colonel Hetherington." *Sidney starts.*

Tom. What's the matter? 320

Sidney. Nothing.

He goes on writing. O' Sullivan taps hammer.

Tom (*speaking*). Amatory : —

(*Sings*) When woman, lovely woman sighs,
You praise her form, her hair, her eyes ;
Would link your heart by tenderest ties, 325
And vow your vows are true.

She answers tenderly and low,
Though from her lips the words that flow,
So softly sweet, are naught we know
But cock-a-doodle-doo ! etc., etc., etc. 330

Tom throws five shillings to Sidney, which rattle on the table. Sidney gives him back the proof ; his face is deadly pale ; as his head falls on the table the Chorus is singing, "Cock-a-doodle-doo," etc. Closed in.

SCENE II. *A Retiring Room at Sir Farintosh Fadi-leaf's ; large archway or alcove at left, with curtains drawn or doors leading to the ballroom ; small arch or alcove at right leading to supper-room, with drawn curtain ; centre opening curtains drawn ; the room is decorated for a ball ; candelabra, flowers, etc.*

(*The lines between inverted commas can be omitted.*)

"Lady Ptarmigan (*without*). Very pretty — very pretty indeed, Sir Farintosh ; all very nice."

327-330 *She answers . . . doodle-doo. The MS. reads : —*

*She answers with a loving kiss,
Swears your [sic] life's chiefest, highest bliss,
And plights herself, why what's all this
But cock-a-doodle-doo !*

*Lady Ptarmigant enters with "Sir Farintosh,"
Lord Ptarmigant, and Maud, all in evening dress.*

"Sir Farintosh (*an old beau*). So kind of you,
"Cousin Ptarmigant, to take pity on a poor old 5
"widower, who has no womankind to receive
"for him, and all that.

"*Lady P.* Not at all — not at all ; I am
"only too glad to be useful."

Lord Ptarmigant (speaking off). Bring chairs. 10

Lady P. Ferdinand, you can't want to go to
sleep again !

Lord P. I know I can't, but I do.

Servant brings two chairs and a small table.

Lady P. Besides, I don't want chairs here ;
young men get lolling about, and then they 15
won't dance. (*Lord Ptarmigant sits and closes his
eyes.*) "Farintosh, (*knocks beard*) the arrivals are
"beginning.

"*Sir F.* But, Lady Ptarmigant, if —

"*Lady P.* Remember, that the old Dowager 20
"Countess of Mcswillumore has plenty of whis-
"key toddy in a green glass, to make believe
"hock.

"*Sir F.* But if —

Lady P. "Now go. Oh dear me ! (*Almost 25
forces Sir Farintosh off.*)" Now, Maud, one word
with you ; you have been in disgrace all this last
week about that writing fellow.

Maud (indignant). What writing fellow?

Lady P. Don't echo me if you please. You 30
know who I mean — Daryl!

Maud. Mr. Daryl is a relation of your ladyship's — the son of the late Sir Percy Daryl, and brother of the present Baronet.

Lady P. And when the present Baronet, that 35
precious Percy, squandered everything at the gaming table, dipped the estates, and ruined himself, Sidney gave up the money left him by his mother, to reinstate a dissolute beggared brother! I don't forget that. 40

Maud (with exultation). I do not forget it, I never shall. To give up all his fortune, to ruin his bright prospects to preserve his brother, and his brother's wife and children, to keep unsullied the honour of his name, was an act — 45

Lady P. Of a noodle, and now he hasn't a penny save what he gets by scribbling, — a pretty pass for a man of family to come to. You are my niece, and it is my solemn duty to get you married if I can. Don't thwart me, 50
and I will. Leave sentiment to servant wenches who sweetheart the policemen; it's unworthy of a lady. I've a man in my eye — a rich one — young Chodd.

Maud (with repugnance). Such a commonplace 55
person.

Lady P. With a very uncommonplace purse. He will have eighteen thousand a year. I have desired him to pay you court, and I desire you to receive it. 60

Maud. He is so vulgar.

Lady P. He is so rich. When he is your husband put him in a back study and don't show him.

Maud. But I detest him. 65

Lady P. What on earth has that to do with it? You wouldn't love a man before you were married to him, would you? Where are your principles? Ask my lord how I treated him before our marriage. (*Hitting Lord Ptarmigant with her fan.*) 70 Ferdinand!

Lord P. (awaking). My love!

Lady P. Do keep awake.

Lord P. 'Pon my word you were making such a noise I thought I was in the House of Commons. (*With fond regret.*) I used to be allowed to sleep so comfortably there. 75

Lady P. Are you not of opinion that a match between Mr. Chodd and Maud would be most desirable? 80

Lord P. (looking at Lady Ptarmigant). Am I not of opinion — my opinion — what is my opinion?

Lady P. (bitting him with her fan). Yes, of course.

Lord P. Yes, of course — my opinion is yes, 85
of course. (*Aside, crossing with chair.*) Just as it
used to be in the House. I always roused in
time to vote as I was told to.

Maud. But, uncle, one can't purchase happi-
ness at shops in packets, like bon-bons. A 90
thousand yards of lace cost so much, they can
be got at the milliner's; but an hour of home
or repose can only be had for love. Mere
wealth —

Lord P. My dear, wealth, if it does not bring 95
happiness, brings the best imitation of it pro-
curable for money. There are two things —
wealth and poverty. The former makes the
world a place to live in; the latter a place to
— go to sleep in — as I do. 100

Leans back in chair and dozes.

“ *Enter Sir Farintosh, Colonel Browser, and Lord
Cloudwrays.*

“ *Sir F.* Have you heard the news? The
“ division is to come off to-night. Many men
“ won't be able to come. I must be off to vote.
“ If the Ministry go out —

“ *Col. B.* They won't go out — there'll be 105
“ a dissolution.

“ *Sir F.* And I shall have to go down to be
“ re-elected. Cloudwrays, will you come and
“ vote?

" Lord C. (*languidly*). No.

110

" Sir F. Why not ?

" Lord C. I'm dying for a weed.

" Sir F. You can smoke in the smoking-room !

" Lord C. So I can, that didn't occur to me ! 115

" Sir F. Ptarmigant, Cousin, you do the honours for me. My country calls, you know, and all that. Come on, Cloudwrays ; how slow you are. Hi, tobacco !

" *Cloudwrays rouses himself. Exeunt Sir*

" *Farintosh and Lord Cloudwrays. Lord*

" *Ptarmigant dozes.*

" Col. B. (*who has been talking to Lady Ptarmigant, 120*
" *turns to Lord Ptarmigant*). As I was saying to
" her ladyship —

" Lady P. Ferdinand, do wake up.

" Lord P. Hear, hear ! (*Waking.*) My dear ! "

Enter Servant.

Page. Mr. Chodd, Mr. John Chodd, and Mr. 125
Stylus.

Enter Chodd Jun., Chodd Sen. and Tom. Exit Servant.

Lady P. My dear Mr. Chodd, how late you are ! Maud dear, here is Mr. Chodd. Do you know we were going to scold you, you naughty men !

130

Chodd Sen. (*astonished, aside*). Naughty men !

Johnny, her ladyship says we're naughty men; we've done something wrong.

Chodd Jun. No, no — it's only her ladyship's patrician fun. Don't call me Johnny. 135
I'm sure I hurried here on the wings of —
(*crossing, falls over Lord Ptarmigan's feet, who rises and turns his chair the reverse way. Chodd seeing Maud, repellant*) — a brougham and pair. Lady Ptarmigan, let me introduce a friend of mine. Lady Ptarmigan — Mr. Stylus, whom I took the liberty of —

140

Lady P. Charmed to see any friend of yours!

Tom advances from back, abashed; as he is backing and bowing he falls over Lord Ptarmigan's legs; Lord Ptarmigan rises with a look of annoyance; they bow; Lord Ptarmigan again turns chair and sits.

“*Lady P.* Mr. Chodd, take me to the ball-room. (*Chodd Sen. offers his arm.*) You will
“look after Maud, I'm sure. (*To Chodd Jun., who smilingly offers his arm to Maud. Maud with a suppressed look of disgust takes it.*) Mr. Si-len-us. 145

“*Tom.* Stylus — ma'am — my lady.

“*Lady P.* Stylus — pardon me — will you be
“kind enough to keep my lord awake? (*Significantly.*) Maud! Now, dear Mr. Chodd.

“*Chodd Jun.* Guv!

150

“*Exeunt Lady Ptarmigan, Maud and the Chodds.*

" *Tom* (*aside*). These are two funny old
" swells !

" *Col. B.* Odd looking fellow. (*To Tom.*) Nice
" place this !

" *Tom.* Very. 155

" *Col. B.* And charming man, Fadileaf.

" *Tom.* Very. I don't know him, but I
" should say he must be very jolly.

" *Col. B.* (*laughing*). Bravo ! Why you're a
" wit ! 160

" *Tom.* Yes. (*Aside.*) What does he mean ?

" *Col. B.* (*offering box*). Snuff ? Who's to win
" the Leger ? Diadeste ?

" *Tom.* I don't know — not in my depart-
" ment. 165

" *Col. B.* (*laughing*). Very good.

" *Tom* (*innocently*). What is ?

" *Col. B.* You are. Do you play whist ?

" *Tom.* Yes ; cribbage, and all fours, like-
" wise. 170

" *Col. B.* We'll find another man and make
" up a rubber.

" *Tom* (*pointing to Lord Ptarmigan asleep*).
" He'll do for dummy.

" *Col. B.* (*laughing*). Capital ! 175

" *Tom.* What a queer fellow this is — he
" laughs at everything I say. *Dance music.*

" *Col. B.* They've begun.

"Tom (*waking up Lord Ptarmigan*). My lady
 "said I was to keep you awake. 180

"Lord P. Thank you.

"Col. B. Come and have a rubber. Let's go
 "and look up Chedbury.

"Lord P. Yes.

"Col. B. (*to Tom*). You'll find us in the card-185
 room.

"*Exeunt Lord Ptarmigan and Col. Browser.*"

(*Note. If preceding lines be omitted, the following
 sentence and business.*)

Lady P. Ferdinand! (*Going up to Lord Ptarmi-
 gant who wakes.*) Do rouse yourself, and follow
 me to the ballroom.

*Exeunt all but Tom. Lord Ptarmigan re-
 turns, and drags chair off after him.*

Tom. Here I am in society, and I think so-190
 ciety is rather slow; it's much jollier at the
 "Owl," and there's more to drink. If it were
 not wicked to say it, how I should enjoy a glass
 of gin and water!

Enter Lady Ptarmigan.

Lady P. Mr. Si-len-us! 195

Tom (*abashed*). Stylus, ma'am, — my lady!

Lady P. Stylus! I beg pardon. You're all alone.

Tom. With the exception of your ladyship.

Lady P. All the members have gone down
 to the House to vote, and we are dreadfully in 200

want of men—I mean dancers. You dance, of course?

Tom (abashed). Oh! of course — I —

Lady P. As it is Leap-year, I may claim the privilege of asking you to see me through a 205 quadrille.

Tom (frightened). My lady! I —

Lady P. (aside). He's a friend of the Chodds', and it will please them. Come, then. (*She takes his arm, sniffing.*) Dear me! What a dreadful 210 smell of tobacco! (*Sniffing.*)

Tom (awfully self-conscious, sniffing). Is there?

Lady P. (sniffing). Some fellow must have been smoking.

Tom (sniffing). I think some fellow must, or 215 some fellow must have been where some other fellows have been smoking. (*Aside.*) It's that beastly parlour at the "Owl."

In taking out his pocket-handkerchief, his pipe falls on floor.

Lady P. What's that?

Tom (in torture). What's what? 220

Turning about, and looking through eyeglass at the air.

Lady P. (pointing). That!

Tom (as if in doubt). I rather think — it — is — a pipe!

219 *What's that.* "This incident is taken from M. Emile Augier's admirable comedy of 'Les Effrontés.' T. W. R."

Lady P. I'm sure of it. You'll join me in the ballroom. *Going up.* 225

Tom. Instantly, your ladyship. (*Exit Lady Ptarmigan. Looking at pipe, he picks it up.*) If ever I bring you into society again — (*drops it.*) Waiter! (*Enter Page.*) Somebody's dropped something. Remove the Whatsoname. (*Quadrille* 230 *music in ballroom; Page goes off and returns with tray and sugar-tongs, with which he picks up pipe with an air of ineffable disgust and goes off.*) Now to spin round the old woman in the mazy waltz. (*Splits kid gloves in drawing them on.*) There goes one-and-nine! *Exit Tom.*

Enter Sidney. He is pale and excited; one of the gold links of his wristband is unfastened.

Sidney. I have seen her — she was smiling, 235 dancing, but not with him. She looked so bright and happy. I won't think of her. How quiet it is here; so different to that hot room, with the crowd of fools and coquettes whirling round each other. I like to be alone — alone! 240 I am now thoroughly — and to think it was but a week ago — one little week — I'll forget her — forget, and hate her. Hate her — Oh, Maud, Maud, till now I never knew how much I loved you; loved you — loved you — gone; 245 shattered; shivered; and for whom? For one of my own birth? For one of my own rank?

No! for a common clown, who — confound this link! — but he is rich — and — it won't hold. (*Trying to fasten it, his fingers trembling.*) I've²⁵⁰ heard it all — always with her, at the Opera and the Park, attentive and obedient — and she accepts him. My head aches. (*Louder.*) I'll try a glass of champagne.

Tom (without). Champagne! here you are!²⁵⁵
(*Draws curtain. Enter Tom with champagne-glass from supper-room; portion of supper-table seen in alcove; seeing Sidney.*) Sidney!

Sidney. Tom! you here!

Tom. Very much here. (*Drinking.*) I was brought by Mr. Chodd.

Sidney. Chodd?²⁶⁰

Tom. Don't startle a fella. You look pale — aren't you well?

Sidney (rallying). Jolly, never better.

Tom. Have some salmon.

Sidney. I'm not hungry.²⁶⁵

Tom. Then try some jelly; it's no trouble to masticate, and is emollient and agreeable to the throat and palate.

Sidney. No, Tom, champagne.

Tom. There you are.²⁷⁰

Fetching bottle from table.

Sidney. I'll meet her eye to eye. (*Drinks.*) Another, Tom — and be as smiling and indiffer-

ent. As for that heavy-metalled dog — thanks,
Tom. (*Drinks.*) Another.

Tom. I've been dancing with old Lady Ptar-275
migrant.

Sidney. Confound her.

Tom. I did. As I was twirling her round I
sent my foot through her dress and tore the skirt
out of the gathers. 280

Sidney (*laughing hysterically*). Good! Good!
Bravo, Tom! Did she row you?

Tom. Not a bit. She said it was of no consequence; but her looks were awful.

Sidney. Ha, ha, ha! Tom, you're a splendid 285
fellow, not like these damned swells, all waist-coat and shirt-front.

Tom. But I like the swells. I played a rubber with them and won three pounds, then I showed them some conjuring tricks — you know I'm a 290
famous conjuror (*taking a pack of cards out of his pocket*). By Jupiter! look here, I've brought the pack away with me; I didn't know I had. I'll go and take it back.

Sidney (*taking cards from him absently*). No, 295
never mind, stay with me, I don't want you to go.

Tom. I find high life most agreeable, everybody is so amiable, so thoughtful, so full of feeling.

Sidney. Feeling! Why, man, this is a flesh market where the match-making mamas and 300

chattering old chaperons have no more sense of feeling than drovers — the girls no more sentiment than sheep, and the best man is the highest bidder; that is, the biggest fool with the longest purse.

305

Tom. Sidney, you're ill.

Sidney. You lie, Tom — never better — excellent high spirits — confound this link!

Enter Lord Cloudwrays and "Sir Farintosh."

Lord Cloudwrays. } By Jove! Ha, Sidney,
"Sir F." } heard the news? 310

Sidney. News? There is no news! The times are bankrupt, and the assignees have sold off the events.

Lord C. }
"Sir F." } The Ministry is defeated.

Tom. No.

315

Lord C. }
"Sir F." } Yes; by a majority of forty-six.

Sidney. Serve them right.

Lord C. }
"Sir F." } Why?

Sidney. I don't know! Why, what a fellow you are to want reasons.

320

Lord C. Sidney!

Sidney. Hullo, Cloudwrays! my bright young British senator — my undeveloped Chatham, and mature Raleigh.

Tom. Will they resign ? 325

Sidney. Why, of course they will ; resignation is the duty of every man, or Minister, who can't do anything else.

Tom. Who will be sent for to form a Government ? 330

Sidney. Cloudwrays.

Lord C. How you do chaff a man !

Sidney. Why not ? Inaugurate a new policy — the policy of smoke — free trade in tobacco ! go in, not for principles, but for Principles — 335 our hearth — our homes, and 'bacca boxes !

Tom. If there's a general election ?

Sidney. Hurrah for a general election ! eh, Cloudwrays ? — “ eh, Farintosh ” ? What speeches you'll make — what lies you'll tell, and 340 how your constituents *won't* believe you !

Lord C. }
“ *Sir F.* ” } How odd you are !

Lord C. Aren't you well ?

Sidney. Glorious ! only one thing annoys me.

Lord C. }
“ *Sir F.* ” } What's that ? 345

Sidney. They won't give me more champagne.

“ *Enter Colonel Browser.* ”

Lord C. Lady Ptarmigan sent me here to say —

"Col. B." Farintosh," the ladies want partners. "Colonel and Sir Farintosh go off." 350

Sidney. Partners! Here are partners for them — long, tall, stout, fat, thin, poor, rich. (*Crossing.*) Cloudwrays, you're the man! (*Enter Chodd Jun. Sidney sees and points to him.*) No; this is the man! 355

Chodd Jun. (*aside*). Confound this fellow!

Sidney. This, sir, is the "Young Lady's Best Companion," well-bound, Bramah-locked, and gilt at the edges. Mind! gilt only at the edges. This link will *not* hold. (*Sees pack of cards in his* 360 *hand.*) Here, Chodd — take these — no, cut for a ten-pound note. *Puts cards on small table.*

Chodd Jun. (*quickly*). With pleasure. (*Aside.*) I'll punish this audacious pauper in the pocket. *Crossing to table.*

Lord C. You mustn't gamble here. 365

Sidney. Only for a frolic!

Chodd Jun. I'm always lucky at cards.

Sidney. Yes, I know an old proverb about that.

Chodd Jun. Eh? 370

Sidney. Lucky at play, unlucky in — This link will not hold.

Chodd Jun. (*maliciously*). Shall we put the stakes down first?

Sidney (*producing portmonnaie*). With pleasure. 375

Lord C. But I don't think it right —

Advancing — Chodd Jun. stays him with his arm.

Tom. Sidney!

Sidney. Nonsense! hold your tongue, Cloud-wrays, and I'll give you a regalia. Let's make it for five-and-twenty?

380

Chodd Jun. Done!

Sidney. Lowest wins — that's in your favour.

Chodd Jun. Eh?

Sidney. Ace is lowest. (*They cut.*) Mine! 385
Double the stakes?

Chodd Jun. Done! *They cut.*

Sidney. Mine again! Double again?

Chodd Jun. Done! *They cut.*

Sidney. You're done again! I'm in splendid 390
play to-night. One hundred, I think?

Chodd Jun. I'd play again (*banding notes*), but I've no more with me.

Sidney. Your word's sufficient — you can send to my chambers — besides, you've got 395
your cheque-book. A hundred again?

Chodd Jun. Yes. *They cut.*

Sidney. Huzzah! Fortune's a lady! Again?
(*Chodd Jun. nods — they cut.*) Bravo! Again?
(*Chodd Jun. nods — they cut.*) Mine again! 400
Again? (*Chodd Jun. nods — they cut.*) Mine

again! Again? (*Chodd Jun. nods — they cut.*)
Same result! That makes five! Let's go in for
a thousand?

Chodd Jun. Done!

405

Lord C. (advancing). No!

Chodd Jun. (savagely). Get out of the way!

*Lord Cloudwrays looks at him through eye-
glass in astonishment.*

Sidney. Pooh! (*They cut.*) Mine! Double
again?

Chodd Jun. Yes.

410

*Lord C. (going round to back of table and seizing
the pack).* No; I can't suffer this to go on —
Lady Ptarmigan would be awful angry.

Going off.

Sidney. Here, Cloudwrays! What a fellow
you are. (*Exit Lord Cloudwrays. Turning to Chodd*
Jun.) You owe me a thousand!

Chodd Jun. I shall not forget it.

Sidney. I don't suppose you will. Confound —
(*trying to button sleeve-link, crossing.*) Oh, to jog
your memory, take this.

420

*Gives him sleeve-link, which he has been
trying to button, and goes off after Lord
Cloudwrays.*

Chodd Jun. And after I have paid you, I'll
remember and clear off the old score.

Tom (*taking his arm as he is going*). Going into the ball-room?

Chodd Jun. (*agabast at his intrusion*). Yes. 425

Tom. I'll go with you.

Chodd Jun. (*disengaging his arm*). I'm engaged.

Exit Chodd Jun. Music till end.

Tom. You've an engaging manner! I'm like a donkey between two bundles of hay. On one side woman — lovely woman! — on the other, 430 wine and wittles. (*Taking out a sovereign.*) Heads, supper — tails, the ladies. (*Tosses at table.*) Supper! sweet goddess, Fortune, accept my thanks!

Exit into supper-room.

Enter Maud and Chodd Jun.

Maud [*aside*]. This dreadful man follows me about everywhere. 435

Chodd Jun. My dear Miss Hetherington!

Maud. I danced the last with you.

Chodd Jun. That was a quadrille.

Enter Sidney.

This is for a polka.

Sidney (*advancing between them*). The lady is 440 engaged to me.

Chodd Jun. (*aside*). This fellow's turned up again. (*To him.*) I beg your pardon.

Sidney. I beg yours. I have a prior claim. (*Bitterly.*) Ask the lady — or perhaps I had bet- 445 ter give her up to you.

Maud. The next dance with you, Mr. Chodd; this one —

Chodd Jun. Miss, your commands are Acts of Parliament. (*Looking spitefully at Sidney as he crosses.*)⁴⁵⁰ I'll go and see what Lady Ptarmigant has to say to this. *Exit Chodd Jun. Music changes to slow waltz.*

Sidney. Listen to me for the last time. My life and being were centred in you. You have abandoned me for money! You accepted me;⁴⁵⁵ you now throw me off, for money! You gave your hand, you now retract, for money! You are about to wed — a knave, a brute, a fool, whom in your own heart you despise, for money!

Maud. How dare you! 460

Sidney. Where falsehood is, shame cannot be. The last time we met (*producing ribbon*) you gave me this. See, 'tis the colour of a man's heart's blood. (*Curtains or doors at back draw apart.*) I give it back to you. 465

Casting bunch of ribbon at her feet.

Lord Cloudwrays, "Sir Farintosh, Colonel Browser,"
Tom, Lord Ptarmigant, and Lady Ptarmigant,
Chodd Jun. and Chodd Sen. appear at back. Guests
seen in ball-room.

And tell you, shameless girl, much as I once loved, and adored, I now despise and hate you.

Lady P. (advancing, in a whisper to Sidney).
Leave the house, sir! How dare you — go!

Sidney. Yes; anywhere.

470

Crash of music. Maud is nearly falling, when Chodd Jun. appears near her; she is about to lean on his arm, but recognising him, retreats and staggers. Sidney is seen to reel through ball-room full of dancers. Drop.

END OF ACT II

ACT III

SCENE I. *The "Owl's Roost" (same as Scene I, Act II). Daylight. The room in order. Tom discovered writing at table at right. Boy sitting on a table at left and holding the placard on which is printed — "Read the 'Morning Earthquake' — a first-class daily paper," etc. On the other [placard], "The Evening Earthquake' — a first-class daily paper — Latest Intelligence," etc.*

Tom. Um! It'll look well on the walls, and at the railway stations. Take these back to the office (*Boy jumps down*) — to Mr. Piker, and tell him he must wait for the last leader — till it's written. (*Exit Boy. Tom walks to and fro, smoking long clay pipe.*) The M. E. — that is the "Morning Earthquake" — shakes the world for the first time to-morrow morning, and everything seems to have gone wrong with it. It is a crude, unmanageable, ill-disciplined, ill-regulated earthquake. Heave the first — Old Chodd behaves badly to me. After organising him a first-rate earthquake, engaging him a brilliant staff, and stunning reporters, he doesn't even offer me the post of sub-editor — ungrateful old humbug! Heave the second — no sooner is he engaged

than our editor is laid up with the gout; and then Old Chodd asks me to be a literary warming-pan, and keep his place hot till colchicum and cold water have done their work. I'll be even with Old Chodd, though! I'll teach him what it is to insult a man who has started eighteen daily and weekly papers — all of them failures. Heave the third — Sidney Daryl won't write the social leaders. (*Sits at end of table at left.*) Poor Sidney! (*Takes out the magenta ribbon which he picked up at the ball.*) I shan't dare to give him this — I picked it up at the ball, at which I was one of the distinguished and illustrious guests. Love is an awful swindler — always drawing upon Hope, who never honours his drafts — a sort of whining beggar, continually moved on by the maternal police. But 'tis a weakness to which the wisest of us are subject — a kind of manly measles which this flesh is heir to, particularly when the flesh is heir to nothing else — even I have felt the divine damnation — I mean emanation. But the lady united herself to another, which was a very good thing for me, and anything but misfortune for her. Ah! happy days of youth! Oh! flowing fields of Runnington-cum-Wapshot — where the yellow corn waved, our young love ripened, and the new gaol now stands. Oh, Sally, when

I think of you and the past, I feel that (*looking 45*
into his pot) the pot's empty, and I could drink
another pint. (*Putting the ribbon in his pocket.*)
Poor Sidney! — I'm afraid he's going to the bad.

*Enter Sidney. He strikes bell on table at left, and sits at
the head, his appearance altered.*

Ha! Sid, is that you? Talk of the — how
d'ye do? 50

Sidney. Quite well — how are you?

Tom. I'm suffering from an earthquake in my
head, and a general printing office in my stomach.
Have some beer?

Enter Waiter.

Sidney. No, thanks — brandy — 55

Tom. So early?

Sidney. And soda. I didn't sleep last night.

Tom. Brandy and soda, and beer again.

Exit Waiter with pint pot off table at right.

Sidney. I never do sleep now — I can't sleep.

Tom. Work hard. 60

Enter Waiter.

Sidney. I do — it is my only comfort — my
old pen goes driving along, at the rate of —
(*Waiter, after placing pint of porter before Tom,
places tray with brandy and soda before Sidney.*)
That's right! (*Waiter uncorks, and exit.*) What
a splendid discovery was brandy. *Drinks.*

Tom. Yes, the man who invented it deserves 65
a statue.

Sidney. That's the reason that he doesn't get
one.

Tom (*reading paper*). "Election Intelligence."
There's the general election — why not go in for 70
that?

Sidney. Election — pooh! — what do I care
for that?

Tom. Nothing, of course, but it's occupation.

Sidney (*musings*). I wonder who'll put up for 75
Springmead?

Tom. Your brother's seat, wasn't it?

Sidney. Yes, our family's for years. By-the-
way, I'd a letter from Percy last mail; he's in
trouble, poor fellow — his little boy is dead, and 80
he himself is in such ill-health that they have
given him sick leave. We are an unlucky race, we
Daryls. Sometimes, Tom, I wish that I were
dead.

Tom. Sidney!

85

Sidney. It's a bad wish, I know; but what to
me is there worth living for?

Tom. What! — oh, lots of things. Why,
there's the police reports — mining intelligence
— hop districts — the tallow market — ambition 90
— Society!

Sidney (*heartily*). Damn Society!

Tom. And you know, Sid, there are more women in the world than one.

Sidney. But only one a man can love. 95

Tom. I don't know about that ; temperaments differ.

Sidney (*pacing about and reciting*). "As the husband, so the wife is."

"Thou art mated to a clown: 100
And the grossness of his nature
Shall have power to drag thee down ;
He will hold thee when his passion
Shall have spent its novel force,
Something better than his dog, and 105
Little dearer than his horse."

I'm ashamed of such a want of spirit — ashamed to be such a baby. And you, Tom, are the only man in the world I'd show it to ; but I — I can think of nothing else but her — and — and 110 of the fate in store for her.

Sobs, and leans on table with his face in his hands.

Tom. Don't give way, Sid ; there are plenty of things in this world to care for.

Sidney. Not for me, — not for me.

Tom. Oh yes ! — there's friendship ; and — 115 and — the little girl, you know.

Sidney. That reminds me, I wrote a week ago to Mrs. Churton, asking her to meet me with Mau — with the little darling in the square. I

always asked them to come from Hampstead to 120
the square, that I might look up at her window
as I passed. What a fool I've been — I can't
meet them this morning. Will you go for me?

Tom. With pleasure.

Sidney. Give Mrs. Churton this. (*Wrapping* 125
up money in paper from Tom's case.) It's the last
month's money. Tell her I'm engaged, and can't
come — and (*putting down money*) buy the baby a
toy, bless her! What a pity to think she'll grow
to be a woman! 130

Enter MacUsquebaugh, O'Sullivan, and Makvicz.

MacUsquebaugh (entering). A three of whiskey,
hot!

O'Sullivan. The same for me — neat.

Dr. Makvicz. A pint of stoot. *All sit.*

O'Sull. Tom, mee boy, what news of the 135
“Earthquake”?

Enter Waiter with orders, and gives Tom a note.

Tom. Heaving, sir — heaving. (*Tom opens note,*
Sidney sits abstracted.) Who's going electioneering?

Dr. M. I am.

O'Sull. And I. 140

MacU. And so am I.

Tom. Where?

MacU. I don't know.

O'Sull. Somewhere — anywhere.

Tom (reading note). From Chodd, Senior — the 145
old villain! (*Reads.*) “Dear Sir — Please meet
me at Lady Ptarmigan’s at eleven p. m.” (*Sud-*
denly.) Sidney!

Sidney (moodily). What?

Tom (reading). “I am off to Springmead-le-150
Beau by the train at two-fifty. My son, Mr.
John Chodd, Jun. is the candidate for the seat
of the borough.”

Sidney (rising). What! — that hound! — that
cur! — that digesting cheque-book — represent 155
the town that my family have held their own for
centuries. I’d sooner put up for it myself.

Tom (rising). Why not? Daryl for Spring-
mead — here’s occupation — here’s revenge!

Sidney. By heaven — I will! 160

Crosses and returns.

Tom. Gentlemen, the health of Mr. Daryl,
M. P. for Springmead!

Sidney crosses.

Omnes (rising and drinking). Hurrah!

Tom. We’ll canvass for you. (*Aside.*) And
now, Mr. Chodd Sen. I see the subject for the 165
last leader. I’ll fetter you with your own type.

Comes down stage.

Sidney (crosses). I’ll do it! I’ll do it! When
does the next train start?

*Mac U. (taking “Bradshaw” from table at
right).* At two-fifty — the next at five. 170

Sidney (crossing). Huzza! (*With excitement.*)
I'll rouse up the tenants — call on the tradesmen!

Crossing.

O'Sull. But the money?

Sidney. I'll fight him with the very thousand
that I won of him. Besides, what need has a 175
Daryl of money at Springmead?

Tom. We can write for you.

O'Sull. And fight for you.

Sidney. I feel so happy. Call cabs.

Mac U. How many?

180

Sidney. The whole rank! *Goes up.*

Tom. Sidney, what colours shall we fight
under?

Sidney. What colours? (*Feels in his breast and
appears dejected; Tom hands him the ribbons; he
clutches them eagerly.*) What colours? Magenta! 185

Omnes. Huzza! *Closed in as they go up.*

SCENE II. *An Apartment at Lord Ptarmigant's.*

Lady Ptarmigant (without). Good-bye, dear
Mr. Chodd. A pleasant ride, and all sorts of
success. (*Enter Lady Ptarmigant.*) Phew! there's
the old man gone. Now to speak to that stupid
Maud. (*Looking off.*) There she sits in the sulks 5
— a fool! Ah, what wise folks the French
were before the Revolution, when there was a

Bastille or a convent in which to pop dangerous young men and obstinate young women. (*Sweetly.*) Maud, dear! I'll marry her to young 10 Chodd, I'm determined.

Enter Maud, very pensive.

Lady P. Maud, I wish to speak to you.

Maud. Upon what subject, aunt?

Lady P. One that should be very agreeable to a girl of your age — marriage. 15

Maud. Mr. Chodd again?

Lady P. Yes, Mr. Chodd again.

Maud. I hate him!

Lady P. You wicked thing! How dare you use such expressions in speaking of a young 20 gentleman so rich?

Maud. Gentleman!

Lady P. Yes, gentleman — at least he will be.

Maud. Nothing can make Mr. Chodd — what a name! — anything but what he is. 25

Lady P. Money can do everything.

Maud. Can it make me love a man I hate?

Lady P. Yes; at least if it don't, it ought. I suppose you mean to marry somebody? 30

Maud. No.

Lady P. You audacious girl! How can you talk so wickedly? Where do you expect to go to?

Maud. To needlework! Anything from this house; and from this persecution.

Lady P. Miss Hetherington!

35

Maud. Thank you, Lady Ptarmigan, for calling me by my name; it reminds me who I am, and of my dead father, "Indian Hetherington," as he was called. It reminds me that the protection you have offered to his orphan daughter has been hourly embittered by the dreadful temper, which is an equal affliction to you as to those within your reach. It reminds me that the daughter of such a father should not stoop to a mésalliance.

Crossing. 45

Lady P. Mésalliance! How dare you call Mr. Chodd a mésalliance! And you hankering after that paltry, poverty-stricken, penny-a-liner!

Maud. Lady Ptarmigan, you forget yourself; and you are untruthful. Mr. Daryl is a gentleman by birth and breeding. I loved him — I acknowledge it — I love him still.

50

Lady P. You shameless girl! and he without a penny! After the scene he made!

Maud. He has dared to doubt me, and I have done with him for ever. For the moment he presumed to think that I could break my plighted word — that I could be false to the love I had acknowledged — the love that was my happiness and pride — all between us is over.

60

Lady P. (*aside*). That's some comfort. (*Aloud.*) Then what do you intend to do?

Maud. I intend to leave the house.

Lady P. To go where?

Maud. Anywhere from you! 65

Lady P. Upon my word! (*Aside.*) She has more spirit than I gave her credit for! (*Aloud.*) And do you mean to tell me that that letter is not intended for that fellow Daryl?

Maud (*giving letter*). Read it. 70

Lady P. (*opens it and reads*). "To the Editor of the 'Times.' Please insert the inclosed advertisement, for which I send stamps. 'Wanted a situation as governess by'" — (*embracing Maud.*) Oh, my dear — dear girl! you couldn't think of 75 such a thing — and you a lady, and my niece.

Maud (*disengaging herself*). Lady Ptarmigant — please don't.

Lady P. (*thoroughly subdued*). But my love, how could I think — 80

Maud. What Lady Ptarmigant thinks is a matter of the most profound indifference to me.

Lady P. (*aside*). Bless her! Exactly what I was at her age! (*Aloud.*) But my dear Maud; what is to become of you? 85

Maud. No matter what! welcome poverty — humiliation — insult — the contempt of fools — welcome all but dependence! I will neither dress myself at the expense of a man I despise, control his household, owe him duty, or lead a 90

life that is a daily lie ; neither will I marry one I love, who has dared to doubt me, to drag him into deeper poverty. *Crossing.*

Enter Servant.

Servant. My lady, there is a gentleman inquiring for Mr. Chodd. 95

Lady P. Perhaps some electioneering friend. Show him here. (*Exit Servant.*) Don't leave the room, Maud dear.

Maud. I was not going — why should I ?

Servant shows in Tom with Little Maud.

Lady P. It's the tobacco man ! 100

Tom (to Child). Do I smell of smoke ? I beg your ladyship's pardon, but Mr. Chodd, the old gentleman, wished to meet me here.

Lady P. He has just driven off to the station.

Tom. I know I'm a few minutes behind time 105 — there's the young lady. Good morning, Miss — Miss — I don't know the rest of her — I — I have been detained by the — this little girl —

Lady P. A sweet little creature, Mr. Silenus.

Tom. Stylus. 110

Lady P. Stylus, pardon me.

Tom (aside). This old lady will insist on calling me Silenus ! She'd think me very rude if I called her Ariadne !

Lady P. Sweet little thing ! Come here, my 115 dear ! (*Little Maud crosses to her.*) Your child, Mr. — Stylus ?

Tom. No, my lady, this is Mr. Sidney Daryl's protégé.

Lady P. (*moving from Little Maud*). Whose? 120

Tom. Sidney Daryl's. *Maud advances.*

Lady P. Nasty little wretch! How do you mean? Speak, quickly!

Tom. I mean that Sidney pays for her education, board, and all that. Oh, he's a splendid 125 fellow — a heart of gold! (*Aside.*) I'll put in a good word for him as his young woman's here. I'll make her repent.

Maud. Come to me, child! (*Little Maud crosses to her.*) Who are you? 130

Little Maud. I'm Mrs. Churton's little darling, and Mr. Daryl's little girl.

Crosses to Tom as Maud moves away.

Lady P. His very image. *Goes to Maud.*

Tom. Bless her little tongue! I took her from the woman who takes care of her. She's going 135 down with me to Springmead. I've bought her a new frock, all one colour, magenta. (*Aside.*) That was strong.

Lady P. Did I tell you Mr. Chodd had gone?

Tom. I'm one too many here. I'll vamose! 140
Good morning, my lady.

Lady P. Good morning, Mr. — Bacchus.

Tom. Stylus! Stylus. I shall have to call her Ariadne. Um! They might have asked the child

to have a bit of currant cake, or a glass of currant wine. Shabby devils!

Exeunt Tom and Little Maud. A pause.

Lady P. (aside). Could anything have happened more delightfully?

Maud (throwing herself into Lady Ptarmigan's arms). Oh, aunty, forgive me — I was wrong — I was ungrateful — forgive me! Kiss me, and forgive me! I'll marry Mr. Chodd — anybody — do with me as you please.

Lady P. My dear niece! (*Affected.*) I — I feel for you. I'm — I'm not so heartless as I seem. I know I'm a harsh, severe old woman, but I am a woman, and I can feel for you.

Embracing her.

Maud. And to think that with the same breath he could swear that he loved me, while another — this child, too! (*Bursts into a flood of tears.*) There, aunt, I won't cry. I'll dry my eyes — I'll do your bidding. You mean me well, while he — oh! (*Shudders.*) Tell Mr. Chodd I'll bear his name, and bear it worthily.

Sternly.

Lady P. (embracing — kissing her at each stop). Men are a set of brutes. I was jilted myself when I was twenty-three — and oh, how I loved the fellow! But I asserted my dignity, and married Lord Ptarmigan, and he, and he

only, can tell you how I have avenged my sex! ¹⁷⁰
Cheer up, my darling! love, sentiment, and
romance are humbug! — but wealth, position,
jewels, balls, presentations, a country house, a
town mansion, society, power — that's true,
solid happiness, and if it isn't, I don't know ¹⁷⁵
what is!

Exeunt.

SCENE III. *The Wells at Springmead-le-Beau. An
avenue of elms, sloping off on left. House with
windows, etc., on to lawn; railings at back of stage.
Garden seats, chairs, lounges, small tables, etc., dis-
covered near house. Lord Ptarmigant discovered
asleep in garden chair against house, his feet resting
on another.*

Enter Chodd Sen. down avenue.

Chodd Sen. Oh dear, oh dear! What a day
this is! There's Johnny to be elected, and I'm
expecting the first copy of the "Morning Earth-
quake" — my paper! my own paper! — by the
next train. Then here's Lady Ptarmigant says ⁵
that positively her niece will have Johnny for her
wedded husband, and in one day my Johnny is
to be a husband, an M. P. and part proprietor of
a daily paper. Whew! how hot it is! It's
lucky that the wells are so near the hustings — ¹⁰

one can run under the shade and get a cooler. Here's my lord! (*Waking him.*) My lord!

Lord Ptarmigan (waking). Oh! eh! Mr. Chodd — good morning! — how d'e do?

Chodd Sen. (sitting on stool). Oh, flurried, and 15
flustered, and worritted. You know to-day's the election.

Lord P. Yes, I believe there is an election going on somewhere. (*Calling.*) A tumbler of the waters No. 2. 20

Enter Waitress from house, places tumbler of water on table, and exit.

Chodd Sen. Oh, what a blessing there is no opposition! If my boy is returned — *Rising.*

Enter Chodd Jun. agitated, a placard in his hand.

Chodd Jun. Look here, guv! look here!

Chodd Sen. What is it, my Johnny?

Chodd Jun. Don't call me Johnny! Look 25
here.

Shows electioneering placard, "Vote for Daryl!"

Chodd Sen. What!

Chodd Jun. That vagabond has put up as candidate! His brother used to represent the borough. 30

Chodd Sen. Then the election will be contested?

Chodd Jun. Yes.

Chodd Sen. sinks on garden chair.

Lord P. (rising and taking tumbler from table).
Don't annoy yourself, my dear Mr. Chodd; these 35
accidents will happen in the best regulated constituencies.

Chodd Jun. Guv, don't be a fool!

Lord P. Try a glass of the waters.

*Chodd Sen. takes tumbler and drinks, and
the next moment ejects the water with a
grimace, stamping about.*

Chodd Sen. Oh, what filth! O-o-o-o-h! 40

Lord P. It is an acquired taste. (*To Waiter.*)
Another tumbler of No. 2.

Chodd Sen. So, Johnny, there's to be a contest, and you won't be M. P. for Springmead after all. 45

Chodd Jun. I don't know that.

Chodd Sen. What d'ye mean?

Chodd Jun. Mr. Sidney Daryl may lose, and, perhaps, Mr. Sidney Daryl mayn't show. After that ball — 50

Chodd Sen. Where you lost that thousand pounds?

Chodd Jun. Don't keep bringing that up, Guv'nor. After that I bought up all Mr. Daryl's bills — entered up judgment and left 55
them with Aaron. I've telegraphed to London, and if Aaron don't nab him in town, he'll catch him here.

Chodd Sen. But Johnny, isn't that rather mean ?

60

Chodd Jun. All's fair in love and Parliament.

Enter Country Boy with newspaper.

Boy. Mr. Chodd ?

Chodd Sen. } Here !
Chodd Jun. }

Boy. Just arrived.

Chodd Jun. The "Morning Earthquake" ! 65

Both clutch at it eagerly ; each secures a paper, and sits under tree.

Chodd Sen. (reading). Look at the leader. "In the present aspect of European politics —"

Chodd Jun. "Some minds seem singularly obtuse to the perception of an idea."

Chodd Sen. Johnny !

70

Chodd Jun. Guv !

Chodd Sen. Do you see the last leader ?

Chodd Jun. Yes.

Chodd Sen. (reading). "The borough of Springmead-le-Beau has for centuries been re- 75
 presented by the house of Daryl."

Chodd Jun. (reading). "A worthy scion of that ancient race intends to offer himself as candidate at the forthcoming election, and, indeed, who will dare to oppose him ?"

80

Chodd Sen. "Surely not a Mister —"

Chodd Jun. "Chodd."

They rise and come down.

Chodd Sen. "Whoever he may be."

Chodd Jun. "What are the Choddian antecedents?"

85

Chodd Sen. "Whoever heard of Chodd?"

Chodd Jun. "To be sure, a young man of that name has recently been the cause of considerable laughter at the clubs on account of his absurd attempts to become a man of fashion." 90

Crossing by each other.

Chodd Sen. "And to wriggle himself into Society."

Crossing again.

Chodd Jun. Why, it's all in his favour.

In a rage.

Chodd Sen. In our paper, too! Oh, that villain Stylus!

Crossing. 95

Chodd Jun. (*crossing*). There are no more of these in the town, are there?

Boy. Yes, sir; a man came down with two thousand; he's giving them away everywhere.

Chodd Jun. Confound you!

100

Pushes him off; follows.

Chodd Sen. Oh dear! oh dear! oh dear! Now, my lord, isn't that too bad? (*Sees him asleep.*) He's off again! (*Waking him.*) My lord! here's the "Earthquake."

Half throwing him off seat.

Lord P. Earthquake! Good gracious! I 105
didn't feel anything! *Rising.*

Chodd Sen. No, no, the paper.

Lord P. Ah, most interesting. (*Drops paper,*
and leisurely reseats himself.) My dear Mr. Chodd,
I congratulate you! 110

Chodd Sen. Congratulate me? (*Looks at watch.*)
I must be off to the committee. *Exit Chodd Sen.*

Lord P. Waiter! am I to have that tumbler
of No. 2?

*Band heard playing "Conquering Hero,"
and loud cheers as Lord Ptarmigan goes
into house, and enter Sidney, O'Sullivan,
MacUsquebaugh, and Dr. Makvicz,
Sidney bowing off as he enters. Cheers.*

Sidney. So far so good. I've seen lots of 115
faces that I knew. I'll run this Dutch-metalled
brute hard, and be in an honourable minority
anyhow.

Enter Tom, hastily.

Tom. Daryl?

Sidney. Yes? 120

Tom. Look out.

Sidney. What's the matter?

Tom. I met our friend, Moses Aaron, on the
platform. He didn't see you, but what does he
want here? 125

Sidney (*musings*). Me, if anybody. This is a

shaft from the bow of Mr. John Chodd Jun.
I see his aim.

Tom. What's to be done? The voters are warm, but, despite the prestige of the family name, if you were not present — 130

Sidney. Besides, I couldn't be returned from Cursitor Street, M. P. for the Queen's Bench. (*Thinking.*) Did the Lamb come down with us?

Tom. Yes — second class. 135

Sidney. Let him stop the bailiffs — Aaron is as timid as a girl. I'll go through here, and out by the grand entrance. Let in the Lamb, and —

Tom. I see.

Sidney. Quick! *Exit Tom.* 140

O'Sullivan. Daryl, is there any fighting to be done?

MacUsquebaugh. Or any drinking?

Dr. Makvicz. If so, we shall be most happy.

Sidney. No, no, thanks. Come with me — 145
I've a treat for you.

Omnes. What?

Sidney (laughing). The chalybeate waters.

Exeunt Omnes into house.

Enter Chodd Jun. and Aaron.

Chodd Jun. You saw him go in — arrest him. The chaise is ready — take him to the next station, and all's right. I'll stay and see him captured. 150
Chodd in great triumph.

Aaron. Very good, shur — do it at vunsh.

Is going into the house, when the Lamb springs out; Aaron staggers back; the Lamb stands in boxing attitude before the door; Tom and six or eight Roughts enter by avenue.

Lamb (with back half turned to audience). Now, then, where are you a-shovin' to? 155

Aaron. I want to passh by.

Lamb. Then you can't.

Aaron. Why not?

Lamb (doggedly). 'Cos I'm doorkeeper, and you haven't got a check. 160

Aaron. Now, Lamb, dooty'sh dooty, and —

Lamb (turning face to audience, and bringing up the muscle of his right arm). Feel that!

Aaron (alarmed). Yesh, shur.

Feels it slightly.

Lamb. You can't come in. 165

Chodd Jun. (crossing to Lamb, fussily). Why not?

Lamb (looks at him, half contemptuously, half comically). 'Cos that says I mustn't let you. Feel it! *Taps muscle.*

Chodd Jun. Thank you, some other time. 170

Crossing. The Roughts surround him, jeer, and prepare to hustle him. Tom mounts seat.

Tom. Vote for Daryl!

Lamb (making up to Aaron in sparring attitude, who retreats in terror). Are yer movin'?

Chodd Jun. Do your duty. *Roughs laugh.*

Aaron. I can't — they are many, I am a few. 175

Cheers without.

Chodd Jun. (*losing his presence of mind*). Particular business requires me at the hustings.

Goes off midst jeers and laughter of Roughs.

Lamb (*at same time advancing on Aaron*). Are ye movin'?

Aaron. Yesh, Mr. Lamb.

180

By this time he has backed close to Tom, perched upon the seat, who bonnets him.

Tom. Vote for Daryl!

Aaron is hustled off by Mob, followed leisurely by Lamb.

Tom (*on chair*). Remember, gentlemen, the officers of the law — the officers of the sheriff — are only in the execution of their duty. (*Shouts and uproar without.*) Don't offer any violence. 185 (*Shouts.*) Don't tear him limb from limb.

Shouts, followed by a loud shriek. Tom leaps from chair, dances down stage, and exit.

Enter Lady Ptarmigan and Chodd Sen. *Lady Ptarmigan is dressed in mauve. Chodd Sen. escorts her to house.*

Chodd Sen. But if he is absent from his post?

Lady P. His post must get on without him. Really, my dear Mr. Chodd, you must allow me to direct absolutely. If you wish your son to 190

marry Miss Hetherington, now is the time, — now or never.

Exit into house. Chodd Sen. exit.

Enter Chodd Jun., and Maud dressed in mauve.

Chodd Jun. Miss Hetherington, allow me to offer you a seat. (*She sits under tree. Aside.*) Devilish awkward! Lady Ptarmigan says, “Strike ¹⁹⁵ while the iron’s hot”; but I want to be at the hustings. I’ve made my speech to the electors, and now I must do my courting. She looks awfully proud. I wish I could pay some fellow to do this for me. Miss Hetherington, a — a — a ²⁰⁰ [*aside*] I got the speech I spoke just now off by heart. I wish I’d got this written for me, too. Miss Hetherington, I — I am emboldened by the — by what I have just been told by our esteemed correspondent, Lady Ptar — I mean by your ²⁰⁵ amiable aunt. I — I — (*boldly*) I have a large fortune, and my prospects are bright and brilliant — bright and brilliant. I — I am of a respectable family, which has always paid its way. I have entered on a political career, which ²¹⁰ always pays its way; and I mean some day to make my name famous. My lady has doubtless prepared you for the hon — I offer you my humble hand, and large — I may say colossal fortune. ²¹⁵

Maud. Mr. Chodd, I will be plain with you.

Chodd Jun. Impossible for Miss Hetherington to be plain.

Maud. You offer me your hand ; I will accept it.

220

Chodd Jun. Oh, joy ! Oh —

Endeavouring to take her hand.

Maud. Please hear me out. On these conditions.

Chodd Jun. Pin money no object. Settle as much on you as you like.

225

Maud. I will be your true and faithful wife — I will bear your name worthily ; but you must understand our union is a union of convenience.

Chodd Jun. Convenience ?

Maud. Yes ; that love has no part in it.

230

Chodd Jun. Miss Hetherington — may I say Maud ? — I love you — I adore you with my whole heart and fortune. (*Aside.*) I wonder how they are getting on at the hustings.

Maud. I was saying, Mr. Chodd —

235

Chodd Jun. Call me John — your own John.

Seizing her hand ; she shudders and withdraws it.

Maud (*struggling with herself*). I was saying that the affection which a wife should bring the man she has elected as —

Cheers without.

Sidney (*speaking without*). Electors of Springmead —

240

Maud. We hardly know sufficient of each other to warrant —

Sidney (*without*). I need not tell you who I am. *Cheers. Maud trembles.* 245

Maud. We are almost strangers.

Sidney. Nor what principles I have been reared in.

Chodd Jun. The name of Chodd, if humble, is at least wealthy. 250

Sidney. I am a Daryl; and my politics those of the Daryls. *Cheers.*

Chodd Jun. (*aside*). This is awkward! (*To Maud.*) As to our being strangers —

Sidney. I am no stranger. (*Cheers.*) I have 255 grown up to be a man among you. There are faces I see in the crowd I am addressing, men of my own age, whom I remember children. (*Cheers.*) There are faces among you who remember me when I was a boy. (*Cheers.*) In the 260 political union between my family and Springmead, there is more than respect and sympathy, there is sentiment. *Cheers.*

Chodd Jun. Confound the fellow! Dearest Miss Hetherington — Dearest Maud — you 265 have deigned to say you will be mine.

Sidney. Why, if we continue to deserve your trust, plight your political faith to another?

Maud (*overcome*). Mr. Chodd, I —

Chodd Jun. My own bright, particular Maud ! 270

Sidney. Who is my opponent ?

Tom (without). Nobody. *A loud laugh.*

Sidney. What is he ?

Tom. Not much. *A roar of laughter.*

Sidney. I have no doubt he is honest and 275
trustworthy, but why turn away an old servant
to hire one you don't know ? (*Cheers.*) Why
turn off an old love that you have tried and
proved for a new one ? (*Cheers.*) I don't know
what the gentleman's politics may be, (*laugh*) 280
— or those of his family. (*Roar of laughter.*) I've
tried to find out, but I can't. To paraphrase
the ballad : —

I've searched through Hansard, journals,
Books, De Brett, and Burke, and Dodd, 285
And my head — my head is aching,
To find out the name of Chodd.

*Loud laughter and three cheers. Maud
near fainting.*

Chodd Jun. I can't stand this ; I must be off
to the hustings, Miss Heth — ! Oh ! she's faint-
ing ! What shall I do ? Lady Ptarmigan ! Oh, 290
here she comes. Waiter, a tumbler of No. 2.

Runs off.

Sidney (without). And I confidently await the
result which will place me at the head of the poll.

Cheers.

Enter Lord and Lady Ptarmigant, from house. Lady Ptarmigant attends to Maud.

Maud. 'Twas nothing — a slight faintness —
an attack of — 295

Lord P. An attack of Chodd, I think! (*Aside.*)
What a dreadful person my lady is, to be sure!
Sits.

Lady P. (to Maud). Have you done it?

Maud. Yes.

Lady P. And you are to be his wife? 300

Maud. Yes. *Cheers.*

*Enter Sidney, O'Sullivan, MacUsquebaugh, and
Dr. Makvicz.*

Sidney (coming down). Tom, I feel so excited
— so delighted — so happy — so — (*Sees Maud,
stops; takes his hat off; Maud bows coldly.*) In my
adversary's colours! 305

Lady P. That fellow Sidney!

Maud (aside). It seems hard to see him
there, and not to speak to him for the last time.

*Is about to advance when Tom brings on
Little Maud, dressed in magenta, — Maud
recedes. Lord Ptarmigant goes to sleep in
garden seat.*

Lady P. The tobacco man!

Tom. Ariadne! 310

*Sidney kisses Little Maud. Enter Chodd
Jun.*

Lady P. (with a withering glance at Sidney).
Maud, my child, here's Mr. Chodd.

Chodd Jun., crossing, gives his arm to Maud. Sidney stands with Little Maud. All go off, except Lady Ptarmigant, Sidney, Little Maud, Tom, and Lord Ptarmigant.

Sidney. On his arm! Well, I deserve it! I am poor!

Lady P. Mr. Daryl? *Sidney bows.* 315

Tom. Ariadne is about to express her feelings;
I shall go. *Exit.*

Lady P. I cannot but express my opinion of your conduct. For a long time I have known you to be the associate of prize-fighters, betting 320 men, racehorses, authors, and other such low persons; but despite that, I thought you had some claims to be a gentleman.

Sidney. In what may I have forfeited Lady Ptarmigant's good opinion? 325

Lady P. In what, sir? In daring to bring me, your kinswoman, and a lady—in daring to bring into the presence of the foolish girl you professed to love—that child—your illegitimate offspring! *Lord Ptarmigant awakes.* 330

Sidney (stung). Lady Ptarmigant, do you know who that child is?

Lady P. (with a sneer). Perfectly!

Sidney. I think not. She is the lawful daughter of your dead and only son, Charles. 335

Lady P. What !

Sidney. Two days before he sailed for the Crimea, he called at my chambers, and told me that he felt convinced he should never return. He told me, too, of his connection with a poor 340 and humble girl, who would shortly become the mother of his child. I saw from his face that the bullet was cast that would destroy him, and I begged him to legitimatise one who, though of his blood, might not bear his name. Like a 345 brave fellow, a true gentleman, on the next day he married.

Lady P. How disgraceful !

Sidney. Joined his regiment, and, as you know, fell at Balaclava. 350

Lady P. My poor — poor boy !

Sidney. His death broke his wife's heart — she, too, died.

Lady P. What a comfort !

Sidney. I placed the child with a good motherly 355 woman, and I had intended, for the sake of my old friend, Charley, to educate her, and to bring her to you, and say : — Take her, she is your lawful grandchild, and a lady *par sang* ; love her, and be proud of her, for the sake of the gallant 360 son, who galloped to death in the service of his country.

Lady P. (affected). Sidney !

Sidney. I did not intend that you should know this for some time. I had some romantic notion³⁶⁵ of making it a reason for your consent to my marriage with — (*Lady Ptarmigan takes Little Maud*) — with Miss Hetherington — that is all over now. The ill opinion with which you have lately pursued me has forced this avowal³⁷⁰ from me.

Lady P. (to child). My darling ! Ah ! my poor Charley's very image ! My poor boy ! My poor boy !

Lord P. (who has been listening, advancing). Sid-³⁷⁵ ney, let my son Charley's father thank you. You have acted like a kinsman and a Daryl.

Affected.

Lady P. Sidney ! forgive me !

Sidney. Pray forget it, Lady Ptarm —

Lady P. I will take care that Miss Hethering-³⁸⁰ ton shall know —

Sidney (bottly). What ! Did she suspect, too ! Lady Ptarmigan, it is my request — nay, if I have done anything to deserve your good opinion, my injunction — that Miss Hetherington is not³⁸⁵ informed of what has just passed. If she has thought that I could love another — she is free to her opinion.

Goes up, and comes down with the child.

Lord P. But I shall tell her.

Lady P. (*astonished*). You! (*Aside.*) Don't 390
you think, under the circumstances, it would be
better —

Lord P. I shall act as I think best.

Lady P. (*authoritatively*). Ferdinand!

Lord P. Lady Ptarmigant, it is not often I 395
speak, goodness knows! but on a question that
concerns my honour and yours, I shall *not* be
silent.

Lady P. (*imploringly*). Ferdinand!

Lord P. Lady Ptarmigant, I am *awake*, and 400
you will please to follow my instructions.
(*Crossing.*) What is my granddaughter's name?

L. Maud. Maud.

Lord P. (*playfully*). Maud, Maud — is it
Maud? 405

*Lord Ptarmigant lifts her in his arms and
is carrying her off.*

Lady P. My lord! consider — people are
looking.

Lord P. Let 'em look — they'll know I'm a
grandfather.

*Lord Ptarmigant exits with Little Maud,
and Lady Ptarmigant, by avenue. Tom
runs on.*

Tom. It's all right, Sid! Three of Chodd's 410
committee have come over to us. They said

that so long as a Daryl was not put up, they felt at liberty to support him, but now — (*seeing that Sidney is affected.*) What's the matter?

Sidney. Nothing.

415

Tom. Ah, that means love! I hope to be able to persuade the majority of Chodd's committee to resign; and if they resign, he must, too, and we shall walk over the course. (*Sidney goes up and sits. Aside.*) Cupid's carriage stops the way again. Confound that nasty, naughty, naked little boy! I wonder if he'd do less mischief if they put him into knickerbockers! *Exit.*

Sidney. Mr. Chodd shall not have Springmead.

425

Enter Maud, leading Little Maud by the hand. Sidney's face is buried in his hands on the table.

Maud (*kissing the child, then advancing slowly to Sidney*). Sidney!

Sidney (*rising*). Maud — Miss Hetherington.

L. Maud. Uncle, this is my new aunt. She's my aunt and you're my uncle. You don't seem pleased to see each other, though, — ain't you? Aunt, why don't you kiss uncle?

Maud (*after a pause*). Sidney, I have to beg your forgiveness for the — the — mistake which —

435

Sidney. Pray don't mention it, Maud — Miss Hetherington, it is not of the —

Maud. It is so hard to think ill of those we have known. *Child goes up.*

Sidney. I think that it must be very easy. 440
Let me take this opportunity of apologising personally, as I have already done by letter, for my misconduct at the ball. I had heard that you were about to — to —

Maud. Marry! Then you were in error. 445
Since then I have accepted Mr. Chodd. *Pause.*

Sidney. I congratulate you.

Turns his face aside.

Maud. You believed me to be false — believed it without inquiry!

Sidney. As you believed of me. 450

Maud. Our mutual poverty prevented.

Sidney (bursting out). Oh, yes, we are poor! We are poor! We loved each other, but we were poor. We loved each other — but we couldn't take a house in a square! We loved 455 each other — but we couldn't keep a carriage! We loved each other — but we had neither gold, plate, purple, nor mansion in the country! You were right to leave me, and to marry a gentleman — rich in all these assurances of happiness. 460

Maud. Sidney, you are cruel.

Sidney. I loved you, Maud; loved you with my whole heart and soul since we played together as children, and you grew till I saw you a

lovely blushing girl, and now — pshaw! this is⁴⁶⁵
folly, sentiment, raving madness! Let me wish
you joy — let me hope you will be happy.

L. Maud (coming down). Uncle, you mustn't
make my new aunt cry. Go and make it up
with her, and kiss her. 470

*Lady Ptarmigan, Lord Ptarmigan, and
Lord Cloudwrays have entered during last
speech.*

Maud. Farewell, Sidney.

Holding out her hand.

Sidney. Farewell.

Lady P. (advancing). Farewell! What non-
sense; two young people so fond of each other.
Sidney — Maud, dear, you have my consent. 475

Sidney (astonished). Lady Ptarmigan!

Lady P. I always liked you, Sidney, though
I confess I didn't always show it.

Lord P. I can explain my lady's sudden con-
version — at least, Cloudwrays can. 480

Lord Cloudwrays. Well, Sid, I'm sorry to be
the bearer of good news — I mean of ill news;
but your brother — poor Percy — he —

Sidney. Dead!

Lord C. The news came by the mail to the⁴⁸⁵
club, so as I'd nothing to do, I thought I'd
come down to congratulate — I mean condole
with you.

Lord P. Bear up, Sidney; your brother's health was bad before he left us. 490

Sidney. First the son, and then the father.

Maud. Sidney!

Sidney (*catching her hand*). *Maud!*

Maud. No, no, — not now — you are rich, and I am promised. 495

Lady P. Why, you wicked girl; you wouldn't marry a man you didn't love, would you? Where are your principles?

Lord Ptarmigan sits on garden seat with Little Maud.

Maud. But — but — Mr. Chodd?

Lady P. What on earth ['s the] consequence 500 [of] Mr. Chodd?

Enter Chodd Sen. and Chodd Jun. by avenue.

Chodd Sen. My lady, it's all right, Johnny has been accepted.

Maud goes up and sits. Sidney and Lord Cloudwrays also go up with her.

Lady P. By whom?

Chodd Sen. By Miss Hetherington — by 505 *Maud.*

Lady P. Why, you must be dreaming, the election has turned your brain — my niece marry a Chodd!

Chodd Sen. } My lady!
Chodd Jun. }

510

500 *earth's . . . of.* All editions: earth consequence is.

Lady P. Nothing of the sort ; I was only joking, and thought you were, too. (*Aside.*) The impertinence of the lower classes in trying to ally themselves with us ! *Going up.*

Chodd Jun. Guv. 515

Chodd Sen. Johnny !

Chodd Jun. We're done ! *Crosses.*

*Loud cheering. Enter Tom, who whispers and congratulates Sidney. Enter a gentleman, who whispers to Chodd Sen. con-
dolingly, and exit.*

Chodd Sen. (shouting). Johnny !

Chodd Jun. Guv !

Chodd Sen. They say there's no hope and 520
advise us to withdraw from the contest.

All congratulate Sidney up stage.

Lady P. Sir Sidney Daryl, M. P., looks like old times. (*To Lord Ptarmigan.*) My lord, congratulate him.

Lord P. (waking, and shaking Chodd Jun. by the hand). Receive my congratulations.

Lady P. Oh ! it's the wrong man !

Chodd Sen. Mr. Stylus, I may thank you for this.

Tom. And yourself, you may. I brought out 530
your journal, engaged your staff, and you tried to throw me over. You've got your reward.
Morning paper ! *Throws papers in the air.*

Enter Aaron with hat broken and head bound up.

Aaron (to Sidney). Arresht you at the shoot of — *The Chodds rub their hands in triumph.* 535

Tom. Too late! too late! He's a member of Parliament!

Chodd Sen. and Chodd Jun. turn into opposite corners.

Sidney (to Tom). I haven't taken the seat or the oaths yet.

Tom. They don't know that. 540

Sidney. We can settle it another way. (*Taking out pocket-book and looking at Chodd Jun.*). Some time ago, I was fortunate enough to win a large sum of money; this way, if you please.

Goes up with Aaron, and gives money, notes, etc.

Chodd Jun. Pays his own bills, which I'd 545 bought up, with my money.

Chodd Sen. (crossing). Then, Johnny, you won't get into Society.

Lady P. (coming down). Never mind, Mr. Chodd, your son shall marry a lady. 550

Chodd Sen. } Eh?
Chodd Jun. }

Lady P. I promise to introduce you to one of blue blood.

Chodd Jun. Blue bl— I'd rather have it the natural colour. 555

Cheers. Enter O'Sullivan, and Committee.

Stage full. Church bells heard.

O'Sull. Sir Sidney Daryl, we have heard the news. In our turn we have to inform you that your adversaries have retired from the contest, and you are member for Springmead. (*Cheers.*) We, your committee, come to weep with you ⁵⁶⁰ for the loss of a brother, to joy with you on your accession to a title and your hereditary honours. (*With intention and Irish gallantry.*) Your committee most respectfully beg to be introduced to Lady Daryl. 565

Sidney shows Maud the magenta ribbon; she places her hand in his.

Sidney. Gentlemen, I thank you; I cannot introduce you to Lady Daryl, for Lady Daryl does not yet exist. In the meantime I have permission to present you to Miss Hetherington.

Tom (*leaping on chair and waving handkerchief*). ⁵⁷⁰
Three cheers for my lady!

All cheer. Church bells; band plays "Conquering Hero." Girl at window of house waves handkerchief, and Child a stick with magenta streamer attached. Countrymen, etc., wave hats; band plays, etc.

CURTAIN.



Caste

SOURCES

Caste was founded on a short story that Robertson wrote in 1866 for *Rates and Taxes*, a Christmas volume edited by Tom Hood, and entitled *The Poor Rate Unfolds a Tale*. No doubt he had this in his mind when he made Sam Gerridge reply to the saucy retort of Polly Eccles, — “You never kill Sepoys” — “No, I pay rates and taxes.”

In this play, Mr. Clement Scott maintains, and no doubt he is right, that we find the echo of the spirit of Thackeray which has often been detected in Robertson's works.

In the story Robertson wrote: “Fairfax Daubray [the George D'Alroy of the subsequent play] was a brave, stupid, good-natured young man, and adored by the men under his command. A finer-hearted gentleman, or a more incapable officer never buckled on a sword-belt. He fought gallantly at Alma, and wrote after the battle. His wife, who was again in the little house in Stangate, read parts of his letter to her sisters, who cheered, and wept, and hurraed as she read. She took them all with her to Church on the following Sunday.

“It was in a hot skirmish that Ensign Daubray found himself in command of his company. His captain had been shot, and the lieutenant borne wounded to the rear. He saw the enemy above him. He knew that it was a soldier's duty to fight, and he led on his men up the hill-side. ‘Dib! Dib! come back!’ shouted two or three old officers from the main body of the troops behind him. Daubray turned round to them. ‘Come back be damned!’ answered he, waving his sword above his head, ‘you fellows come on!’ . . . The wounded man smiled again, pressed his friend's hand, sank back, and died, as the general of division galloped up and said to a bleeding major — ‘Beautiful! beautiful! Like men, by God!’ . . . Major Swynton [afterwards called Captain Hawtrey] returned to England with one of his coat sleeves empty.”

Commenting on story and play Mr. Clement Scott has said: — “How thoroughly all this is in the very spirit of Thackeray! and who can wonder that Robertson's favourite ‘bit’ in *Vanity Fair*,

which he was never tired of reading to his friends, was the picture of the Battle of Waterloo, and 'Amelia praying for George, who was lying dead with a bullet through his heart'? We seem in *Caste* to be reading of Becky, and Jos, and Amelia, and George, and Dobbin, not of Polly, and D'Alroy, and Hawtree, and Esther. That incident of Hawtree returning from the Crimea with his 'coat-sleeve empty' is very characteristic of the writer, who was so passionately attracted by soldiers and their English pluck. Mr. Bancroft, as he tells us in his Memoirs, wanted to introduce a maimed Hawtree with an empty coat-sleeve in the last act of *Caste*. Why has it never been done?"

No doubt Robertson originally intended that the character of D'Alroy should be played from the "heavy" or "stupid" point of view, showing a true heart and invincible courage under a dense exterior. Frederick Younge, who first interpreted the part, acted it after that fashion, and made a great impression. Subsequently the part fell into the hands of the more fascinating "lover" of stage romance.

For Robertson's story in full see *Appendix*.

In *Caste* there is one passage that reads strangely like a reminiscence of Dickens. It will be remembered that when Mr. Perker (accompanied by Mr. Pickwick) visited the White Hart Inn in the Borough, and finding Sam Weller cleaning boots, addressed that worthy, saying, "This is a curious old house of yours," the reply was, "If you'd sent word you was a coming, we'd ha' had it repaired." Similarly, when the Marquise first visited the home of the Eccles family in the "Little House in Stangate," its lord and master retorted to her semi-aside — "What a hole!" — "If we'd a know'd your ladyship 'ad been a-coming we'd a' 'ad the place cleaned up a bit."

To
MISS MARIE WILTON
(*Mrs. Bancroft*)

THIS COMEDY IS DEDICATED

BY

HER GRATEFUL FRIEND

AND

FELLOW LABOURER

THE AUTHOR

CAST OF CHARACTERS

*Prince of Wales' Theatre, London,
April 6, 1867*

HON. GEORGE D'ALROY	MR. FREDERICK YOUNGE
CAPTAIN HAWTREE	MR. BANCROFT
ECCLES	MR. GEORGE HONEY
SAM GERRIDGE	MR. HARE
DIXON	
MARQUISE DE ST. MAUR	MISS LARKIN
ESTHER ECCLES	MISS MARIE WILTON
POLLY ECCLES	MISS LYDIA FOOTE

ACT I. The Little House at Stangate.	COURTSHIP
ACT II. The Lodgings in Mayfair.	MATRIMONY
ACT III. The Little House in Stangate.	WIDOWHOOD

*A lapse of eight months occurs between the first and the second Act,
and a lapse of twelve months between the second and the third.*

*No good
made for
accus*

Caste

ACT I

SCENE I. *A plain set chamber, paper soiled. A window, with practicable blind; street backing and iron railings. Door practicable, when opened showing street door (practicable). Fireplace; two-hinged gas-burners on each side of mantel-piece. Sideboard cupboard, cupboard in recess; tea-things, tea-pot, tea-caddy, tea-tray, etc., on it. Long table, before fire; old piece of carpet and rug down; plain chairs; book-shelf, back; a small table under it with ballet-shoe and skirt on it; bunch of benefit bills hanging under book-shelf. Theatrical printed portraits, framed, hanging about; chimney glass clock; box of lucifers and ornaments on mantel-shelf; kettle on hob, and fire laid; door-mats on the outside of door. Bureau in lower right-hand corner. Rapping heard at door, the handle is then shaken as curtain rises. The door is unlocked. Enter George D'Alroy.*

George D'Alroy. Told you so; the key was left under the mat in case I came. They're not back from rehearsal. (*Hangs up hat on peg near door as Hawtree enters.*) Confound rehearsal!

Crosses to fireplace.

Hawtree (back to audience, looking round). And 5
this is the fairy's bower!

Geo. Yes; and this is the fairy's fireplace;
the fire is laid. I'll light it.

Lights fire with lucifer from mantel-piece.

Haw. (turning to George). And this is the
abode rendered blessed by her abiding. It is here 10
that she dwells, walks, talks, — eats and drinks.
Does she eat and drink?

Geo. Yes, heartily. I've seen her.

Haw. And you are really spoons! — case of
true love — hit — dead. 15

Geo. Right through. Can't live away from her.

With elbow on end of mantel-piece, down stage.

Haw. Poor old Dal! and you've brought me
over the water to —

Geo. Stangate.

Haw. Stangate — to see her for the same 20
sort of reason that when a patient is in a dan-
gerous state one doctor calls in another — for
a consultation.

Geo. Yes. Then the patient dies.

Haw. Tell us all about it — you know I've 25
been away. *Sits at table, leg on chair.*

Geo. Well then, eighteen months ago —

Haw. Oh cut that! you told me all about
that. You went to a theatre, and saw a girl in
a ballet, and you fell in love. 30

Geo. Yes. I found out that she was an amiable, good girl.

Haw. Of course; cut that. We'll credit her with all the virtues and accomplishments.

Geo. Who worked hard to support a drunken 35 father.

Haw. Oh! the father's a drunkard, is he? The father does not inherit the daughter's virtues?

Geo. No. I hate him.

40

Haw. Naturally. Quite so! Quite so!

Geo. And she — that is, Esther — is very good to her younger sister.

Haw. Younger sister also angelic, amiable, accomplished, etc.

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Geo. Um — good enough, but got a temper — large temper. Well, with some difficulty, I got to speak to her. I mean to Esther. Then I was allowed to see her to her door here.

Haw. I know — pastry-cooks — Richmond 50 dinner — and all that.

Geo. You're too fast. Pastry-cooks — yes. Richmond — no. Your knowledge of the world, fifty yards round barracks, misleads you. I saw her nearly every day, and I kept on falling in 55 love — falling and falling, until I thought I should never reach the bottom; then I met you.

Haw. I remember the night when you told

me; but I thought it was only an amourette. However, if the fire is a conflagration, subdue 60 it; try dissipation.

Geo. I have.

Haw. What success?

Geo. None; dissipation brought me bad health and self-contempt, a sick head and a-sore 65 heart.

Haw. Foreign travel; absence makes the heart grow (*slight pause*) — stronger. Get leave and cut away.

Geo. I did get leave, and I did cut away; and 70 while away I was miserable and a gone-er coon than ever.

Haw. What's to be done?

Sits cross-legged on chair, facing George.

Geo. Don't know. That's the reason I asked you to come over and see. 75

Haw. Of course, Dal, you're not such a soft as to think of marriage. You know what your mother is. Either you are going to behave properly, with a proper regard for the world, and all that, you know; or you're going to do 80 the other thing. Now, the question is, what do you mean to do? The girl is a nice girl, no doubt; but as to your making her Mrs. D'Alroy, the thing is out of the question.

Geo. Why? What should prevent me? 85

Haw. Caste ! — the inexorable law of caste. The social law, so becoming and so good, that commands like to mate with like, and forbids a giraffe to fall in love with a squirrel.

Geo. But my dear Bark —

90

Haw. My dear Dal, all those marriages of people with common people are all very well in novels and plays on the stage, because the real people don't exist, and have no relatives who exist, and no connections, and so no harm's done, and it's rather interesting to look at ; but in real life with real relations, and real mothers and so forth, it's absolute bosh ; it's worse, it's utter social and personal annihilation and damnation.

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Geo. As to my mother, I haven't thought about her.

Sits corner of table.

Haw. Of course not. Lovers are so damned selfish ; they never think of anybody but themselves.

105

Geo. My father died when I was three years old, and she married again before I was six, and married a Frenchman.

Haw. A nobleman of the most ancient families of France, of equal blood to her own. She obeyed the duties imposed on her by her station and by caste.

Geo. Still, it caused a separation and a divi-

sion between us, and I never see my brother, because he lives abroad. Of course the Mar-¹¹⁵
quise de St. Maur is my mother, and I look upon her with a sort of superstitious awe.

Moves chair with which he has been twisting about during speech from table to left corner.

Haw. She's a grand Brahmin priestess.

Geo. Just so; and I know I'm a fool. Now you're clever, Bark,—a little too clever, I think.¹²⁰ You're paying your devoirs — that's the correct word, isn't it — to Lady Florence Carberry, the daughter of a countess. She's above you — you've no title. Is she to forget *her* caste?

Haw. That argument doesn't apply. A man¹²⁵ can be no more than a gentleman.

Geo.

“True hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.”

Haw. Now, George, if you're going to consider this question from the point of view of¹³⁰ poetry, you're off to No-Man's Land, where I won't follow you.

Geo. No gentleman can be ashamed of the woman he loves. No matter what her original station, once his wife he raises her to his rank.¹³⁵

Haw. Yes, he raises her; — *her*; but her connections — her relatives. How about them?

Eccles enters.

Eccles (outside). Polly! Polly! Polly! (*Enters.*)
Why the devil —

George crosses to Hawtree, who rises. Eccles sees them and assumes a deferential manner.

Eccles. Oh, Mr. De-Alroy! I didn't see you, 140
sir. Good afternoon; the same to you, sir, and
many on 'em. *Puts hat on bureau and comes down.*

Haw. Who is this?

Geo. This is papa.

Haw. Ah!

145

Turns up to book-shelf, scanning Eccles through eye-glass.

Geo. Miss Eccles and her sister not returned
from rehearsal yet?

Eccles. No, sir, they have not. I expect 'em
in directly. I hope you've been quite well since
I seen you last, sir?

150

Geo. Quite, thank you; and how have you
been, Mr. Eccles?

Eccles. Well, sir, I have not been the thing at
all. My 'elth, sir, and my spirits is both broke.
I'm not the man I used to be. I am not accus- 155
tomed to this sort of thing. I've seen better
days, but they are gone — most like for ever. It
is a melancholy thing, sir, for a man of my time
of life to look back on better days that are gone
most like for ever.

160

Geo. I daresay.

Eccles. Once proud and prosperous, now poor and lowly. Once master of a shop, I am now, by the pressure of circumstances over which I have no control, driven to seek work and not to find it. Poverty is a dreadful thing, sir, for a man as has once been well off.

Geo. I daresay.

Eccles (*sighing*). Ah, sir, the poor and lowly is often 'ardly used. What chance has the working-man?

Haw. None when he don't work.

Eccles. We are all equal in mind and feeling.

Geo. (*aside*). I hope not.

Eccles. I am sorry, gentlemen, that I cannot offer you any refreshment; but luxury and me has long been strangers.

Geo. I am very sorry for your misfortunes, Mr. Eccles. (*Looking round at Hawtree who turns away.*) May I hope that you will allow me to offer you this trifling loan?

Giving him half a sovereign.

Eccles. Sir, you're a gentleman. One can tell a real gentleman with half a sov — I mean half an eye — a real gentleman understands the natural emotions of the working-man. Pride, sir, is a thing as should be put down by the strong 'and of pecuniary necessity. There's a friend

of mine round the corner as I promised to meet on a little matter of business; so if you will excuse me, sir — 190

Geo. With pleasure.

Eccles (going up). Sorry to leave you, gentlemen, but —

Geo. Don't stay on my account.

Haw. Don't mention it. 195

Eccles. Business is business. (*Goes up.*) The girls will be in directly. Good afternoon, gentlemen, — good afternoon — (*going out.*) Good afternoon. *Exit.*

George sits in chair, corner of table, right.

Haw. (coming down left of table). Papa is not too nice, but — (*sitting on corner of table down stage*)

“True hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.”

Poor George! I wonder what your mamma — the Most Noble the Marquise de St. Maur²⁰⁵ — would think of Papa Eccles. Come, Dal, allow that there *is something* in caste. Conceive that dirty ruffian — that rinsing of stale beer — that walking tap-room, for a father-in-law. Take a spin to Central America. Forget her. 210

Geo. Can't.

Haw. You'll be wretched and miserable with her.

Geo. I'd rather be wretched with her than

miserable without her. (*Hawtree takes out cigar* 215 *case.*) Don't smoke here!

Haw. Why not?

Geo. She'll be coming in directly.

Haw. I don't think she'd mind.

Geo. I should. Do you smoke before Lady 220 Florence Carberry?

Haw. (*closing case*). Ha! You're suffering from a fit of the morals.

Geo. What's that?

Haw. The morals is a disease, like the 225 measles, that attacks the young and innocent.

Geo. (*with temper*). You talk like Mephistopheles, without the cleverness.

Goes up to window and looks at watch.

Haw. (*arranging cravat at glass*). I don't pretend to be a particularly good sort of fellow, 230 nor a particularly bad sort of fellow. I suppose I'm about the average standard sort of thing, and I don't like to see a friend go down hill to the devil while I can put the drag on. (*Turning, with back to fire.*) Here is a girl of very humble 235 station — poor, and all that, with a drunken father, who evidently doesn't care how he gets money so long as he don't work for it. Marriage! Pah! Couldn't the thing be arranged?

Geo. ~~Hawtree, cut that!~~ (*At window.*) She's 240 here!

Goes to door and opens it.

Enter Esther.

Geo. (*flurried at sight of her*). Good morning.
I got here before you, you see.

Esther. Good morning.

*Sees Hawtree — slight pause, in which
Hawtree has removed his hat.*

Geo. I've taken the liberty—I hope you²⁴⁵
won't be angry—of asking you to let me present
a friend of mine to you; Miss Eccles—
Captain Hawtree.

*Hawtree bows. George assists Esther in
taking off bonnet and shawl.*

Haw. (*aside*). Pretty.

Esther (*aside*). Thinks too much of himself.²⁵⁰

Geo. (*hangs up bonnet and shawl on pegs*). You've
had a late rehearsal. Where's Polly?

Esther. She stayed behind to buy something.

Enter Polly.

Polly (*head through door*). How de do, Mr.
D'Alroy? Oh! I'm tired to death. Kept at²⁵⁵
rehearsal by an old fool of a stage manager.
But stage managers are always old fools,—
except when they are young. We shan't have
time for any dinner, so I've brought something
for tea.

260

Esther. What is it?

Polly. Ham. (*Showing ham in paper. Esther sits*

right, at window. Crossing. Seeing Hawtree.) Oh!
I beg your pardon, sir. I didn't see you.

Geo. A friend of mine, Mary. Captain Haw-265
tree — Miss Mary Eccles.

*George sits at window. Polly bows very
low, to left, to right, and to front, half
burlesquely, to Hawtree.*

Haw. Charmed.

Polly (*aside*). What a swell! Got nice teeth,
and he knows it. How quiet we all are; let's
talk about something. 270

*Hangs up her hat. She crosses to fire round
table, front. Hawtree crosses and places
hat on bureau.*

Esther. What can we talk about?

Polly. Anything. Ham. Mr. D'Alroy, do you
like ham?

Geo. I adore her — (*Polly titters*) — I mean
I adore it. 275

*Polly (to Hawtree, who has crossed to table watch-
ing Polly undo paper containing ham. She turns the
plate on top of the ham still in the paper, then throws
the paper aside and triumphantly brings the plate under
Hawtree's nose, Hawtree giving a little start back.)*
Do you like ham, sir? (*Very tragically.*)

Haw. Yes.

Polly. Now that is very strange. I should
have thought you'd have been above ham. 280

Getting tea-tray.

Haw. May one ask why?

Polly. You look above it. You look quite equal to tongue — glazed. (*Laughing.*) Mr. D'Alroy is here so often that he knows our ways. 285

Getting tea-things from sideboard and placing them on table.

Haw. I like everything that is piquante and fresh, and pretty and agreeable.

Polly (*laying table all the time for tea*). Ah! you mean that for me. (*Curtseying.*) Oh! (*Sings.*) Tra, la, la, la, la, la. (*Flourishes cup in his face; 290 he retreats a step.*) Now I must put the kettle on. (*George and Esther are at window.*) Esther never does any work when Mr. D'Alroy is here. They're spooning; ugly word, spooning, isn't it? — reminds one of red-currant jam. By the 295 bye, love is very like red-currant jam — at the first taste sweet, and afterwards shuddery. Do you ever spoon?

Haw. (*leaning across table*). I should like to do so at this moment. 300

Polly. I daresay you would. No, you're too grand for me. You want taking down a peg — I mean a foot. Let's see — what are you — a corporal?

Haw. Captain. 305

Polly. I prefer a corporal. See here. Let's

change about. You be corporal — it'll do you good, and I'll be "my lady."

Haw. Pleasure.

Polly. You must call me "my lady," though,³¹⁰ or you shan't have any ham.

Haw. Certainly, "my lady"; but I cannot accept your hospitality, for I'm engaged to dine.

Polly. At what time?

Haw. Seven.

315

Polly. Seven! Why, that's half-past tea-time. Now, Corporal, you must wait on me.

Haw. As the pages did of old.

Polly. "My lady."

Haw. "My lady."

320

Polly. Here's the kettle, Corporal.

Holding out kettle at arm's length. Hawtree looks at it through eye-glass.

Haw. Very nice kettle.

Polly. Take it into the back kitchen.

Haw. Eh!

Polly. Oh, I'm coming too.

325

Haw. Ah! that alters the case.

He takes out handkerchief and then takes hold of kettle — crosses as George rises and comes down, slapping Hawtree on back. Hawtree immediately places kettle on the floor. Polly throws herself into chair by fireside up stage, and roars with laughter. George and Esther laugh.

Geo. What are you about?

Haw. I'm about to fill the kettle.

Esther (*going to Polly*). Mind what you are doing, Polly. What will Sam say? 330

Polly. Whatever Sam chooses. What the sweetheart can't see the husband can't grieve at. Now then — Corporal!

Haw. "My lady!" *Takes up kettle.*

Polly. Attention! Forward! March! and 335
mind the soot don't drop upon your trousers.

Exeunt Polly and Hawtree, Hawtree first.

Esther. What a girl it is — all spirits! The worst is that it is so easy to mistake her.

Geo. And so easy to find out your mistake.
(*They cross down stage, Esther first.*) But why won't 340
you let me present you with a piano?

Following Esther.

Esther. I don't want one.

Geo. You said you were fond of playing.

Esther. We may be fond of many things without having them. (*Leaning against end of 345
table. Taking out letter.*) Now here is a gentleman says he is attached to me.

Geo. (*jealous*). May I know his name?!

Esther. What for? It would be useless, as his solicitations — *Throws letter into fire.* 350

Geo. I lit that fire.

Esther. Then burn these, too. (*George crosses to fire.*) No, not that. (*Taking one back.*) I must keep that; burn the others.

George throws letters on fire, crosses back of table quickly—takes hat from peg and goes to door as if leaving hurriedly. Esther takes chair from table and goes to centre of stage with it, noticing George's manner. George hesitates at door. Shuts it quickly, hangs his hat up again, and comes down to back of chair in which Esther has seated herself.

Geo. Who is that from? 355

Esther. Why do you wish to know?

Geo. Because I love you, and I don't think you love me, and I fear a rival.

Esther. You have none.

Geo. I know you have so many admirers. 360

Esther. They're nothing to me.

Geo. Not one?

Esther. No. They're admirers, but there's not a husband among them.

Geo. Not the writer of that letter? 365

Esther (*coquettishly*). Oh, I like him very much.

Geo. (*sighing*). Ah!

Esther. And I'm very fond of this letter.

Geo. Then, Esther, you don't care for me.

Esther. Don't I? How do you know? 370

Geo. Because you won't let me read that letter.

Esther. It won't please you if you see it.

Geo. I daresay not. That's just the reason
that I want to. You won't?

Esther (*hesitates*). I will. There! 37½

Giving it to him.

Geo. (*reads*). "Dear Madam."

Esther. That's tender, isn't it?

Geo. "The terms are four pounds — your
dresses to be found. For eight weeks certain,
and longer if you should suit. (*In astonishment.*) 380
I cannot close the engagement until the return
of my partner. I expect him back to-day, and
I will write you as soon as I 'have seen him.
Yours very," etc. Four pounds — find dresses.
What does this mean? 385

Esther. It means that they want a Columbine
for the Pantomime at Manchester, and I think
I shall get the engagement.

Geo. Manchester; then you'll leave London? |

Esther. I must. (*Pathetically.*) You see this 390
little house is on my shoulders. Polly only earns
eighteen shillings a week, and father has been
out of work a long, long time. I make the bread
here, and it's hard to make sometimes. I've
been mistress of this place, and forced to think 395
ever since my mother died, and I was eight years

old. Four pounds a week is a large sum, and I can save out of it.

(This speech is not to be spoken in a tone implying hardship.)

Geo. But you'll go away, and I shan't see you.

Esther. P'raps it will be for the best. *(Rises and crosses.)* What future is there for us? You're a man of rank, and I am a poor girl who gets her living by dancing. It would have been better that we had never met.

Geo. No.

Esther. Yes, it would, for I'm afraid that — 405

Geo. You love me?

Esther. I don't know. I'm not sure; but I think I do. *Stops and turns half-face to George.*

Geo. *(trying to seize her hand).* Esther! 410

Esther. No. Think of the difference of our stations.

Geo. That's what Hawtree says! Caste! caste! curse caste! *Goes up.*

Esther. If I go to Manchester it will be 415 for the best. We must both try to forget each other.

Geo. *(comes down by table).* Forget you! no, Esther; let me — *Seizing her hand.*

Polly *(without).* Mind what you're about. Oh 420 dear! oh dear!

George and Esther sit in window seat.

Enter Polly and Hawtree.

Polly. You nasty, great clumsy corporal, you've spilt the water all over my frock. Oh dear! (*Coming down. Hawtree puts kettle on ham on table.*) Take it off the ham! (*Hawtree then places it on the mantel-piece.*) No, no! put it in the fireplace. 425 (*Hawtree does so.*) You've spoilt my frock.

Sitting.

Haw. Allow me to offer you a new one.

Crossing.

Polly. No, I won't. You'll be calling to see how it looks when it's on. Haven't you got a handkerchief? 430

Haw. Yes.

Polly. Then wipe it dry.

Hawtree bends almost on one knee, and wipes dress. Enter Sam, whistling. Throws cap into Hawtree's hat on drawers.

Sam (sulkily). Arternoon — yer didn't hear me knock! — the door was open. I'm afraid I intrude. 435

Polly. No, you don't. We're glad to see you if you've got a handkerchief. Help to wipe this dry. —

Sam pulls out handkerchief from slop, and dropping on one knee snatches skirt of dress from Hawtree, who looks up surprised.

Haw. I'm very sorry. (*Rising.*) I beg your pardon. *Business ; Sam stares Hawtree out.* 440

Polly. It won't spoil it.

Sam. The stain won't come out. *Rising.*

Polly. It's only water.

Sam (*to Esther*). Afternoon, Miss Eccles.
(*To George.*) Afternoon, sir! (*Polly rises.* *To* 445
Polly.) Who's the other swell?

Polly. I'll introduce you. Captain Hawtree —
Mr. Samuel Gerridge.

Haw. Charmed, I'm sure. (*Staring at Sam through eye-glass. Sam acknowledges Hawtree's recognition by a "chuck" of the head over left shoulder ; going up to George.*) Who's this? 450

Geo. Polly's sweetheart.

Haw. Oh! Now if I can be of no further assistance, I'll go.

Comes over back down to drawers.

~~Polly.~~ Going, Corporal?

Haw. Yaas! (*Business ; taking up hat and stick* 455
from bureau he sees Sam's cap. He picks it out carefully, and coming down stage examines it as a curiosity, drops it on the floor and pushes it away with his stick, at the same time moving backwards, causing him to bump against Sam, who turns round savagely.) I beg your pardon. (*Crossing up stage.*) George, will you — (*George takes no notice.*) Will you —?

Geo. What?

| Haw. Go with me?

Geo. Go? No!

Haw. (*coming down to Polly*). Then, Miss Eccles — I mean “my lady.”

Shaking hands and going; as he backs away bumps against Sam, and business repeated, Hawtree close to door keeping his eye on Sam, who has shown signs of anger.

Polly. Good-bye, Corporal!

Haw. (*at door*). Good-bye! Good after-noon, Mr. — Mr. — er — Pardon me.

Sam (*with constrained rage*). Gerridge, sir — Gerridge.

Haw. (*as if remembering name*). Ah! Gerridge. Good-day.

Exit. 470

Sam (*turning to Polly in awful rage*). Who's that fool? Who's that long idiot?

Polly. I told you; Captain Hawtree.

Sam. What's 'e want 'ere?

Polly. He's a friend of Mr. D'Alroy's. 475

Sam. Ugh! Isn't one of 'em enough!

Polly. What do you mean?

Sam. For the neighbours to talk about. Who's he after?

Polly. What do you mean by after? You're forgetting yourself, I think. 480

Sam. No, I'm not forgetting myself — I'm remembering you. What can a long fool of a swell dressed up to the nines within an inch of his life want with two girls of your class? Look 485

at the difference of your stations! 'E don't come 'ere after any good.

During the speech, Esther crosses to fire and sits before it in a low chair. George follows her and sits on her left.

Polly. Samuel!

Sam. I mean what I say. People should stick to their own class. Life's a railway journey, 490 and Mankind's a passenger — first class, second class, third class. Any person found riding in a superior class to that for which he has taken his ticket will be removed at the first station stopped at, according to the bye-laws of the 495 company.

Polly. You're giving yourself nice airs! What business is it of yours who comes here? Who are you?

Sam. I'm a mechanic.

500

Polly. That's evident.

Sam. I ain't ashamed of it. I'm not ashamed of my paper cap.

Polly. Why should you be? I daresay Captain Hawtree isn't ashamed of his fourteen-and-505 sixpenny gossamer.

Sam. You think a deal of him 'cos he's a captain. Why did he call you "my lady"?

Polly. Because he treated me as one. I wish you'd make the same mistake.

510

Sam. Ugh!

Sam goes angrily to bureau. Polly bounces up stage, and sits in window seat.

Esther (sitting with George, tête-à-tête, by fire).

[But we must listen to reason.

Geo. I hate reason!

Esther. I wonder what it means? 515

Geo. Everything disagreeable. When people talk unpleasantly, they always say listen to reason.

Sam (turning round). What will the neighbours say? 520

Polly. I don't care! *Coming down.*

Sam. What will the neighbours think?

Polly. They can't think. They're like you, they've not been educated up to it.

Sam. It all comes of your being on the stage. 525
Going to Polly.

Polly. It all comes of your not understanding the stage or anything else — but putty. Now, if you were a gentleman —

Sam. Why then, of course, I should make up to a lady. 530

Polly. Ugh!

Polly flings herself into chair by table.

Geo. Reason's an idiot. Two and two are four, and twelve are fifteen, and eight are twenty. That's reason!

Sam (turning to Polly). Painting your cheeks! 535

Polly (rising). Better paint our cheeks than paint nasty old doors as you do. How can you understand art? You're only a mechanic! You're not a professional! You're in trade. You are not of the same station as we are. When 540 the manager speaks to you, you touch your hat, and say, "Yes, sir," because he's your superior.

Snaps fingers under Sam's nose.

Geo. When people love there's no such thing as money — it don't exist.

Esther. Yes, it does.

545

Geo. Then it oughtn't to.

Sam. The manager employs me same as he does you. Payment is good anywhere and everywhere. Whatever's commercial, is right.

Polly. Actors are not like mechanics. They 550 wear cloth coats, and not fustian jackets.

Sam (sneeringly in Polly's face). I despise play actors.

Polly. I despise mechanics.

Polly slaps his face.

Geo. I never think of anything else but you. 555

Esther. Really?

Sam (goes to bureau, misses cap, looks around, sees it on floor, picks it up angrily, and comes to Polly, who is sitting by the table). I won't stay here to be insulted.

Putting on cap. 560

Polly. Nobody wants you to stay. Go ! Go ! 560
Go !

Sam. I will go. Good-bye, Miss Mary Eccles. (*Goes off and returns quickly.*) I shan't come here again !
At door half-open.

Polly. Don't ! Good riddance to bad rubbish. 565

Sam (*rushing down stage to Polly*). You can go to your captain !

Polly. And you to your putty.

*Sam throws his cap down and kicks it —
then goes up stage and picks it up. Polly
turns and rises, leaning against table,
facing him, crosses to door, and locks it.
Sam, hearing click of lock, turns quickly.*

Esther. And shall you always love me as you do now ? 570

Geo. More.

Polly. Now you shan't go. (*Locking door, taking out key, which she pockets, and placing her back against door.*) Nyer ! Now I'll just show you my power. Nyer !

Sam. Miss Mary Eccles, let me out ! 575

Advancing to door.

Polly. Mr. Samuel Gerridge, I shan't !

Sam turns away.

Esther. Now you two. (*Postman's knock.*)
The postman !

Sam. Now you must let me out. You must unlock the door. 580

Polly. No, I needn't. (*Opens window, looking out.*) Here — postman. (*Takes letter from postman at window.*) Thank you. (*Business; flicks Sam in the face with letter.*) For you, Esther!

Esther (*rising*). For me?

585

Polly. Yes.

Gives it to her, and closes window, and returns to door triumphantly. Sam goes to window.

Esther (*going down*). From Manchester!!

Geo. Manchester? *Coming down back of Esther.*

Esther (*reading*). I've got the engagement — four pounds a week.

590

Geo. (*placing his arm around her*). You shan't go.
Esther — stay — be my wife!

Esther. But the world — your world?

Geo. Hang the world! You're my world.

Stay with your husband, *Mrs. George D'Alroy.* 595

During this Polly has been dancing up and down in front of the door.

Sam. I will go out!

Turning with sudden determination.

Polly. You can't, and you shan't!

Sam. I can — I will!

Opens window and jumps out.

Polly. (*frightened*). He's hurt himself. Sam —

Sam. — dear Sam!

600

Running to window. Sam appears at window. Polly slaps his face and shuts window down violently.

Polly. Nyer!

During this George has kissed Esther.

Geo. My wife!

The handle of the door is heard to rattle, then the door is shaken violently. Esther crosses to door; finding it locked, turns to Polly sitting in window seat, who gives her the key. Esther then opens the door. Eccles reels in, very drunk, and clings to the corner of the bureau for support. George stands pulling his moustache. Esther, a little way up, looking with shame first at her father, then at George. Polly sitting in window recess.

ACT DROP

For call. — George, hat in hand, bidding Esther good-bye. Eccles sitting in chair, nodding before fire. Sam again looks in at window. Polly pulls the blind down violently.

ACT II

SCENE I. *D'Alroy's lodgings in Mayfair. A set chamber. Folding-doors opening on to drawing-room. Door on the right. Two windows, with muslin curtains. Loo-table. Sofa above piano. Two easy-chairs, on each side of table. Dessert — claret in jug ; two wine-glasses half full. Box of cigarettes, vase of flowers, embroidered slipper on canvas, and small basket of coloured wools, all on table. Foot-stool by easy-chair. Ornamental gilt work-basket on stand in window. Easy-chair. Piano. Mahogany-stained easel with oil-painting of D'Alroy in full dragoon regimentals. Davenport with vase of flowers on it ; a chair on each side ; a water-colour drawing over it, and on each side of room. Half moonlight through window. Esther and George discovered. Esther at window. When curtain has risen she comes down slowly to chair right of table, and George sitting in easy-chair left of table. George has his uniform trousers and spurs on.*

Esther. George, dear, you seem out of spirits.
George (smoking cigarette). Not at all, dear, not
at all. *Rallying.*

Esther. Then why don't you talk ?

Geo. I've nothing to say.

Esther. That's no reason.

Geo. I can't talk about nothing.

Esther. Yes, you can ; you often do. (*Crossing round back of table and caressing him.*) You used to do before we were married. 10

Geo. No, I didn't. I talked about you, and my love for you. D'ye call that nothing?

Esther (*sitting on stool left of George*). How long have we been married, dear? Let me see ; six months yesterday. (*Dreamily.*) It hardly 15 seems a week ; it almost seems a dream.

Geo. (*putting his arm around her*). Awfully jolly dream. Don't let us wake up. (*Aside and recovering himself.*) How ever shall I tell her?

Esther. And when I married you I was 20 twenty-two, wasn't I?

Geo. Yes, dear ; but then, you know, you must have been some age or other.

Esther. No ; but to think I lived two and twenty years without knowing you ! 25

Geo. What of it, dear ?

Esther. It seems such a dreadful waste of time.

Geo. So it was — awful.

Esther. Do you remember our first meeting ? 30 Then I was in the ballet.

Geo. Yes ; now you're in the heavies.

Esther. Then I was in the front rank — now I am of high rank — the Honourable Mrs.

| George D'Alroy. You promoted me to be your 35
wife.

Geo. No, dear, you promoted me to be your
husband.

Esther. And now I'm one of the aristocracy ;
ain't I ? 40

Geo. Yes, dear ; I suppose that we may con-
sider ourselves —

Esther. Tell me, George ; are you quite
sure that you are proud of your poor little hum-
ble wife ? 45

| *Geo.* Proud of you ! Proud as the winner of
the Derby.

Esther. Wouldn't you have loved me better
if I'd been a lady ?

| *Geo.* You *are* a lady — you're my wife. 50

Esther. What will your mamma say when
she knows of our marriage ? I quite tremble at
the thought of meeting her.

Geo. So do I. Luckily she's in Rome.

Esther. Do you know, George, I should like 55
to be married all over again.

Geo. Not to anybody else, I hope ?

Esther. My darling !

Geo. But why over again ? Why ?

Esther. Our courtship was so beautiful. It 60
was like in a novel from the library, only bet-
ter. You, a fine, rich, high-born gentleman,

coming to our humble little house to court poor me. Do you remember the ballet you first saw me in? That was at Covent Garden. "Jeanne la Folle; or, the Return of the Soldier." (*Goes up to piano.*) Don't you remember the dance?

Plays a quick movement.

Geo. Esther, how came you to learn to play the piano? Did you teach yourself?

Esther. Yes. (*Turning on music-stool.*) So did Polly. We can only just touch the notes to amuse ourselves.

Geo. How was it?

Esther. I've told you so often.

Rises and sits on stool at George's feet.

Geo. Tell me again. I'm like the children — 75 |
I like to hear what I know already.

Esther. Well, then, mother died when I was quite young. I can only just remember her. Polly was an infant; so I had to be Polly's mother. Father — who is a very eccentric man 80
(*George sighs deeply — Esther notices it and goes on rapidly — all to be simultaneous in action*) but a very good one when you know him — did not take much notice of us, and we got on as we could. We used to let the first floor, and a lodger took it — Herr Griffenhaagen. He was a ballet mas- 85
ter at the Opera. He took a fancy to me, and asked me if I should like to learn to dance, and

**pantomime*

I told him father couldn't afford to pay for my tuition; and he said that (*imitation*) he did not want bayment, but dat he would teach me for noding, for he had taken a fancy to me, because I was like a leetle lady he had known long years ago in de far off land he came from. Then he got us an engagement at the theatre. That was how we first were in the ballet. 95

Geo. (slapping his leg). That fellow was a great brick; I should like to ask him to dinner. What became of him?

Esther. I don't know. He left England. (*George fidgets and looks at watch.*) You are restless, George. What's the matter? 100

Geo. Nothing.

Esther. Are you going out?

Geo. Yes. (*Looking at his boots and spurs.*) That's the reason I dined in — 105

Esther. To the barracks?

Geo. Yes.

Esther. On duty?

Geo. (hesitatingly). On duty. (*Rising.*) And, of course, when a man is a soldier, he must go on duty when he's ordered, and where he's ordered — and — (*aside*) — why did I ever enter the service? 110

Crosses.

Esther (rises, crosses to George — and twining her arm round him). George, if you must go out to 115

your club, go; don't mind leaving me. Somehow or other, George, these last few days everything seems to have changed with me — I don't know why. Sometimes my eyes fill with tears, for no reason, and sometimes I feel so happy, for no ¹²⁰ reason. I don't mind being left by myself as I used to do. When you are a few minutes behind time I don't run to the window and watch for you, and turn irritable. Not that I love you less — no, for I love you more; but often when ¹²⁵ you are away I don't feel that I am by myself. (*Dropping her head on his breast.*) I never feel alone!

Goes to piano and turns over music.

Geo. (*watching Esther*). What angels women are! At least, this one is. I forget all about the others. (*Carriage-wheels heard off.*) If I'd known ¹³⁰ I could have been so happy, I'd have sold out when I married.

Knock at street door.

Esther (*standing at table*). That for us, dear?

Geo. (*at first window*). Hawtree in a hansom. He's come for — (*aside*) — me. I *must* tell her ¹³⁵ sooner or later. (*At door.*) Come in, Hawtree.

Enter Hawtree, in 'regimentals.

Hawtree. How do? Hope you're well, Mrs. D'Alroy? (*Coming down.*) George, are you coming to —

Geo. (*coming down left of Hawtree*). No, I've ¹⁴⁰ dined — (*gives a significant look*) — we dined early. }

Esther plays scraps of music at piano.

Haw. (*sotto voce*). Haven't you told her?

Geo. No, I daren't.

Haw. But you must.

Geo. You know what an awful coward I am. 145
You do it for me.

Haw. Not for worlds. I've just had my own adieux to make.

Geo. Ah, yes, — to Florence Carberry. How did she take it? 150

Haw. Oh, (*slight pause*) very well.

Geo. (*earnestly*). Did she cry?

Haw. No.

Geo. Nor exhibit any emotion whatever?

Haw. No, not particularly. 155

Geo. (*surprisedly*). Didn't you kiss her?

Haw. No; Lady Clardonax was in the room.

Geo. (*wonderingly*). Didn't she squeeze your hand?

Haw. No. 160

Geo. (*impressively*). Didn't she say anything?

Haw. No, except that she hoped to see me back again soon, and that India was a bad climate.

Geo. Umph! It seems to have been a tragic 165 parting (*serio-comically*) — almost as tragic as parting — your back hair.

Haw. Lady Florence is not the sort of person to make a scene.

Geo. To be sure, she's not your wife. I wish 170
Esther would be as cool and comfortable. (*After
a pause.*) No, I don't, — no, I don't.

A rap at door.

Enter Dixon.

Geo. (*goes up to Dixon*). Oh, Dixon, lay out
my —

Dixon. I have laid them out, sir; everything 175
is ready.

Geo. (*going down to Hawtree — after a pause —
irresolutely*). I must tell her — mustn't I?

Haw. Better send for her sister. Let Dixon
go for her in a cab. 180

Geo. Just so. I'll send him at once. Dixon!

Goes up and talks to Dixon.

Esther (*rising and going to back of chair, left of
table*). Do you want to have a talk with my
husband? Shall I go into the dining-room?

Haw. No, Mrs. D'Alroy. 185

Going to table and placing cap on it.

Geo. No, dear. At once, Dixon. Tell the
cabman to drive like — (*exit Dixon*) — like a
— cornet just joined.

Esther (*to Hawtree*). Are you going to take
him anywhere? 190

Haw. (*George comes down and touches Hawtree
quickly on the shoulder before he can speak*). No.
(*Aside.*) Yes — to India. (*Crossing to George.*)
Tell her now.

Geo. No, no. I'll wait till I put on my uni-195
form. *Going up.*

Door opens and Polly peeps in.

Polly. How d'ye do, good people, — quite
well? *Polly gets back of table — kisses Esther.*

Geo. Eh? Didn't you meet Dixon?

Polly. Who? 200

Geo. Dixon — my man.

Polly. No.

Geo. Confound it! — he'll have his ride for
nothing. How d'ye do, Polly? *Shakes hands.*

Polly. How d'ye do, George. 205

*Esther takes Polly's things and goes up stage
with them. Polly places parasol on table.*

Esther returns left of Polly.

Polly. Bless you, my turtles. (*Blessing them,
ballet fashion.*) George, kiss your mother. (*He
kisses her.*) That's what I call an honourable
brother-in-law's kiss. I'm not in the way, am I?

Geo. (*behind easy-chair right of table*). Not at 210
all. I'm very glad you've come.

*Esther shows Polly the new music. Polly
sits at piano and plays comic tune.*

Haw. (*back to audience, and elbow on easy-chair,
aside to George*). Under ordinary circumstances
she's not a very eligible visitor.

Geo. Caste again. (*Going up.*) I'll be back 215
directly. *Exit George.*

Haw. (*looking at watch and crossing*). Mrs. D'Alroy, I—

Esther (*who is standing over Polly at piano*).
Going? 220

Polly (*rising*). Do I drive you away, Captain?
*Taking her parasol from table. Esther gets
to back of chair left of table.*

Haw. No.

Polly. Yes, I do. I frighten you, I'm so ugly.
I know I do. You frighten me.

Haw. How so? 225

Polly. You're so handsome. (*Coming down.*)
Particularly in those clothes, for all the world
like an inspector of police.

Esther (*half aside*). Polly!

Polly. I will! I like to take him down a bit. 230

Haw. (*aside*). This is rather a wild sort of
thing in sisters-in-law.

Polly. Any news, Captain?

Haw. (*in a drawling tone*). No. Is there any
news with you? 235

Polly (*imitating him*). Yaas; we've got a new
piece coming out at our theatre.

Haw. (*interested*). What's it about?

Polly (*drawling*). I don't know. (*To Esther.*)
Had him there! (*Hawtree drops his sword from his 240
arm; Polly turns round quickly, hearing the noise, and
pretends to be frightened.*) Going to kill anybody
to-day, that you've got your sword on?

Haw. No.

Polly. I thought not.

(Sings) "With a sabre on his brow, 245
And a helmet by his side,
The soldier sweethearts servant-maids,
And eats cold meat besides."

Laughs and walks about waving her parasol.

Enter George in uniform, carrying in his hand his sword, sword-belt, and cap. Esther takes them from him, and places them on sofa, then comes half down. George goes down by Hawtree.

Polly (*clapping her hands*). Oh! here's a beautiful brother-in-law! Why didn't you come in 250 on horseback as they do at Astley's? — gallop in and say (*imitating soldier on horseback and prancing up and down stage during the piece*), Soldiers of France! the eyes of Europe are a-looking at you! The Empire has confidence in you, and 255 France expects that every man this day will do his — little utmost! The foe is before you — more's the pity — and you are before them — worse luck for you! Forward! Go and get killed; and to those who escape the Emperor 260 will give a little bit of ribbon! Nineteens, about! Forward! Gallop! Charge!

Galloping to right, imitating bugle, and giving point with parasol. She nearly spears Hawtree's nose. Hawtree claps his hand

upon his sword-hilt. She throws herself into chair, laughing, and clapping Hawtree's cap (from table) upon her head. All laugh and applaud. Carriage-wheels heard without.

Polly. Oh, what a funny little cap, it's got no peak. (*A peal of knocks heard at street door.*) What's that? 265

Geo. (*who has hastened to window*). A carriage! Good heavens—my mother!

Haw. (*at window*). The Marchioness!

Esther (*crossing to George*). Oh, George!

Polly (*crossing to window*). A Marchioness! 270
A real, live Marchioness! Let me look! I never saw a real live Marchioness in all my life.

Geo. (*forcing her from window*). No, no, no! She doesn't know I'm married. I must break it to her by degrees. What shall I do? 275

By this time Hawtree is at door right.

Esther at door left.

Esther. Let me go into the bedroom until—

Haw. Too late! She's on the stairs.

Esther. Here, then!

At centre doors, opens them.

Polly. I want to see a real, live March—

George lifts her in his arms and places her within folding-doors with Esther—then shutting doors quickly, turns and faces Hawtree, who, gathering up his sword,

faces George. They then exchange places much in the fashion of soldiers "mounting guard." As George opens door and admits Marchioness, Hawtree drops down to left.

Geo. (with great ceremony). My dear mother, 280
I saw you getting out of the carriage.

Marchioness. My dear boy (*kissing his forehead*).
I'm so glad I got to London before you embarked. (*George nervous. Hawtree coming down.*)
Captain Hawtree, I think. How do you do? 285

Haw. (coming forward a little). Quite well, I
thank your ladyship. I trust you are —

Mar. (sitting in easy-chair). Oh, quite, thanks.
(*Slight pause.*) Do you still see the Countess and
Lady Florence? 290

Looking at him through her glasses.

Haw. Yes.

Mar. Please remember me to them— (*Hawtree takes cap from table, and places sword under his arm.*) Are you going?

Haw. Yaas — Compelled. (*Bows, crossing round back of table. To George who meets him.*) I'll 295
be at the door for you at seven. We must be
at barracks by the quarter. (*George crosses back of table.*) Poor devil! This comes of a man marrying
beneath him.

Exit Hawtree. George comes down left of table.

Mar. I'm not sorry that he's gone, for I³⁰⁰ wanted to talk to you alone. Strange that a woman of such good birth as the Countess should encourage the attention of Captain Hawtree for her daughter Florence. (*During these lines D'Alroy conceals Polly's hat and umbrella under table.*)

Lady Clardonax was one of the old Carberrys³⁰⁵ of Hampshire — not the Norfolk Carberrys, but the direct line. And Mr. Hawtree's grandfather was in trade — something in the City — soap, I think. Stool, George! (*Points to stool. George brings it to her. She motions that he is to sit at her feet. George does so with a sigh.*), He's a very nice³¹⁰ person, but parvenu, as one may see by his languor and his swagger. My boy (*kissing his forehead*), I am sure, will never make a mésalliance. He is a D'Alroy, and by his mother's side Planta-genista. The source of our life³¹⁵ stream is royal.

Geo. How is the Marquis?

Mar. Paralysed. I left him at Spa with three physicians. He is always paralysed at this time of the year; it is in the family. The³²⁰ paralysis is not personal, but hereditary. I came over to see my steward; got to town last night.

Geo. How did you find me out here?

Mar. I sent the footman to the barracks, and he saw your man Dixon in the street, and³²⁵

Dixon gave him this address. It's so long since I've seen you. (*Leans back in chair.*) You're looking very well, and I daresay when mounted are quite a "beau cavalier." And so, my boy (*playing with his hair*), you are going abroad for 330 the first time on active service.

Geo. (aside). Every word can be heard in the next room. If they've only gone upstairs.

Mar. And now, my dear boy, before you go I want to give you some advice; and you 335 mustn't despise it because I'm an old woman. We old women know a great deal more than people give us credit for. You are a soldier — so was your father — so was his father — so was mine — so was our royal founder; we were 340 born to lead! The common people expect it from us. It is our duty. Do you not remember in the *Chronicles of Froissart*? (*With great enjoyment.*) I think I can quote it word for word; I've a wonderful memory for my age. 345 (*With closed eyes.*) It was in the fifty-ninth chapter — "How Godefroy D'Alroy helde the towne of St. Amande duryng the siege before Tournay." It said "the towne was not closed but with pales, and captayne there was Sir Amory 350 of Pauy — the Seneschall of Carcassoune — who had said it was not able to hold agaynste an hooste, when one Godefroy D'Alroy sayd.

that rather than he woulde depart, he woulde keepe it to the best of his power. Whereat the souldiers cheered and sayd, 'Lead us on, Sir Godefroy.' And then began a fierce assault; and they within were chased, and sought for shelter from street to street. But Godefroy stood at the gate so valyantly that the souldiers helde the towne until the commyng of the Earl of Haynault with twelve thousande men."

Geo. (aside). I wish she'd go. If she once gets onto Froissart, she'll never know when to stop.

Mar. When my boy fights — and you will fight — he is sure to distinguish himself. It is his nature to — (*toys with his hair*) — he cannot forget his birth. And when you meet these Asiatic ruffians, who have dared to revolt, and to outrage humanity, you will strike as your ancestor Sir Galtier of Chevrault struck at Poitiers. (*Changing tone of voice as if remembering.*) Froissart mentions it thus : — " Sir Galtier, with his four squires, was in the front, in that battell, and there did marvels in arms. And Sir Galtier rode up to the Prince, and sayd to him — ' Sir, take your horse and ryde forth, this journey is yours. God is this daye in your handes. Gette us to the French Kynge's batayle. I think verily by his valyantesse, he woll not fly. Advance banner in the name of God and of Saynt George!'

And Sir Galtier galloped forward to see his Kyng's victory, and meet his own death."

Geo. (aside). If Esther hears all this!

Mar. There is another subject about which³⁸⁵ I should have spoken to you before this; but an absurd prudery forbade me. I may never see you more. I am old — and you — are going into battle — (*kissing his forehead with emotion*) — and this may be our last meeting. (*Noise heard*³⁹⁰ *within folding-doors.*) What's that?

Geo. Nothing — my man Dixon in there.

Mar. We may not meet again on this earth. I do not fear your conduct, my George, with men; but I know the temptations that beset³⁹⁵ a youth who is well born. But a true soldier, a true gentleman, should not only be without fear, but without reproach. It is easier to fight a furious man than to forego the conquest of a love-sick girl. A thousand Sepoys slain in battle⁴⁰⁰ cannot redeem the honour of a man who has betrayed the confidence of a trusting woman. Think, George, what dishonour — what stain upon your manhood — to hurl a girl to shame and degradation! And what excuse for it?⁴⁰⁵ That she is plebeian? A man of real honour will spare the woman who has confessed her love for him as he would give quarter to an enemy he had disarmed. (*Taking his hands.*)

Let my boy avoid the snares so artfully spread ;⁴¹⁰
and when he asks his mother to welcome the
woman he has chosen for his wife, let me take
her to my arms and plant a motherly kiss upon
the white brow of a lady. (*Noise of a fall heard*
within folding-doors. Rising.) What's that ?⁴¹⁵

Geo. (rising). Nothing.

Mar. I heard a cry.

Folding-doors open ; discovering Esther with
Polly, staggering in, fainting.

Polly. George ! George !

George goes up and Esther falls in his arms.

George places Esther on sofa. George on
her right, Polly on her left.

Mar. (coming down). Who are these women ?

Polly. Women !⁴²⁰

Mar. George D'Alroy, these persons should
have been sent away. How could you dare to
risk your mother meeting women of their stamp ?

Polly (violently). What does she mean ? How
dare she call me a woman ? What's she, I'd⁴²⁵
like to know ?

Geo. Silence, Polly ! You mustn't insult my
mother.

Mar. The insult is from you. I leave you,
and I hope that time may induce me to forget⁴³⁰
this scene of degradation. *Turning to go.*

Geo. Stay, mother. (*Marchioness turns slightly*
away.) Before you go (*George has raised Esther*

from sofa in his arms) let me present to you Mrs.

George D'Alroy. *My wife!*

435

Mar. Married!

Geo. Married.

Marchioness sinks into easy-chair; George replaces Esther on sofa, but still retains her hand. Three hesitating taps at door heard. George crosses to door, opens it, discovers Eccles, who enters. George drops down back of Marchioness's chair.

Eccles. They told us to come up. When your man came Polly was out; so I thought I should do instead. (*Calling at door.*) Come up, 440 Sam.

Enter Sam in his Sunday clothes, with short cane and smoking a cheroot. He nods and grins — Polly points to Marchioness — Sam takes cheroot from his mouth and quickly removes his hat.

Eccles. Sam had just called; so we three — Sam and I, and your man, all came in the 'ansom cab together. Didn't we, Sam.

Eccles and Sam go over to the girls, and Eccles drops down to front of table — smilingly.

Mar. (*with glasses up, to George*). Who is this? 445

Geo. (*coming left of Marchioness*). My wife's father.

Mar. What is he?

Geo. A — nothing.

Eccles. I am one of nature's noblemen. 450

Happy to see you, my lady — (*turning to her*)
— now, my daughters have told me who you
are — (*George turns his back in an agony as Eccles
crosses to Marchioness*) — we old folks, fathers and
mothers of the young couples, ought to make⁴⁵⁵
friends. *Holding out his dirty hand.*

Mar. (*shrinking back*). Go away! (*Eccles goes
back to table again, disgusted.*) What's his name?

Geo. Eccles.

Mar. Eccles! Eccles! There never was an⁴⁶⁰
Eccles. He don't exist.

Eccles. Don't he, though? What d'ye call this?

*Goes up again to back of table as Sam drops
down. He is just going to take a decanter
when Sam stops him.*

Mar. No Eccles was ever born! ✓

Geo. He takes the liberty of breathing not-
withstanding. (*Aside.*) And I wish he wouldn't.⁴⁶⁵

Mar. And who is the little man? Is he also
Eccles?

*Sam looks round. Polly gets close up to him, and
looks with defiant glance at the Marchioness.*

Geo. No.

Mar. Thank goodness! What then?

Geo. His name is Gerridge.

470

Mar. Gerridge! It breaks one's teeth. Why
is he here? ✓

Geo. He is making love to Polly, my wife's
sister.

Mar. And what is he?

475

Geo. A gasman.

Mar. He looks it. (*George goes up to Esther.*)

And what is she — the — the sister?

Eccles, who has been casting longing eyes at the decanter on table, edges towards it, and when he thinks no one is noticing, fills wine-glass.

Polly (*asserting herself indignantly*). I'm in the ballet at the Theatre Royal, Lambeth. So was 480 Esther. We're not ashamed of what we are! We have no cause to be.

Sam. That's right, Polly! pitch into them swells! — who are they?

Eccles by this time has seized wine-glass, and turning his back, is about to drink, when Hawtree enters. Eccles hides glass under his coat, and pretends to be looking up at picture.

Haw. (*entering*). George! (*Stops suddenly, 485 looking round.*) So, all's known!

Mar. (*rising*). Captain Hawtree, see me to my carriage; I am broken-hearted.

Takes Hawtree's arm and is going up.

Eccles (who has tasted the claret, spits it out with a grimace, exclaiming). Rot! 490

Polly goes to piano — sits on stool — Sam, back to audience, leaning on piano. Eccles exits through folding-doors.

Geo. (*to Marchioness*). Don't go in anger.
You may not see me again.

*Esther rises in nervous excitement, clutching George's hand. Marchioness stops.
Esther brings George down.*

Esther (with arm round his neck). Oh, George!
must you go? *They come to front of table.*

Geo. Yes.

495

Esther. I can't leave you. I'll go with you!

Geo. Impossible! The country is too unsettled.

Esther. May I come after you?

Geo. Yes.

500

Esther (with her head on his shoulder). I may.

Mar. (coming down, Hawtree at door). It is his duty to go. His honour calls him. The honour of his family — *our* honour.

Esther. But I love him so! Pray don't be angry with me!

Haw. (looking at watch and coming down).
George!

Geo. I must go, love.

Hawtree goes up to door again.

Mar. (advancing). Let me arm you, George — let your mother, as in the days of old. There is blood — and blood, my son. See, your wife cries when she should be proud of you!

Geo. My Esther is all that is good and

noble. No lady born to a coronet could be ⁵¹⁵ gentler or more true. Esther, my wife, fetch me my sword, and buckle my belt around me.

Esther (clinging to him). No, no; I can't!

Geo. Try. (Whispers to Esther.) To please my mother. (*To Marchioness.*) You shall see. (*Esther* ⁵²⁰ *totters up stage, Polly assisting her, and brings down his sword. As Esther is trying to buckle his belt, he whispers.*) I've left money for you, my darling. My lawyer will call on you to-morrow. Forgive me! I tried hard to tell you we were ordered for India; but when the time came, my heart failed me, and I — 525

Esther, before she can succeed in fastening his sword-belt, reels, and falls fainting in his arms. Polly hurries to her. Sam standing at piano, looking frightened; Hawtree with hand upon handle of door; Marchioness looking on, at right of George.

ACT DROP

For call — George and Hawtree gone. Esther in chair fainting; Polly and Sam each side of her, Polly holding her hands, and Sam fanning her with his red handkerchief. The folding-doors thrown open, and Eccles standing at back of table offering glass of claret.

ACT III

SCENE : — *The room in Stangate (as in Act I). Same furniture as in Act I, with exception of piano, with roll of music tied up on it, in place of bureau. Map of India over mantel-piece. Sword with crape knot, spurs, and cap, craped, hanging over chimney-piece. Portrait of D' Alroy (large) on mantel-piece. Berceau-nette, and child, with coral, in it. Polly's bonnet and shawl hanging on peg. Small tin saucepan in fender, fire alight, and kettle on it. Two candles (tallow) in sticks, one of which is broken about three inches from the top and hangs over. Slate and pencil on table. Jug on table, bandbox and ballet skirt on table. At rise of curtain Polly discovered at table, back of stage. Comes down and places skirt in bandbox. She is dressed in black.*

Polly (placing skirt in box, and leaning her chin upon her hand). There — there's the dress for poor Esther in case she gets the engagement, which I don't suppose she will. It's too good luck, and good luck never comes to her, poor thing. 5
(Goes up to back of cradle.) Baby's asleep still. How good he looks — as good as if he were dead, like his poor father; and alive too, at the same time, like his dear self. Ah! dear me; it's a strange world. (Sits in chair right of table, feel- 10

ing in pocket for money.) Four and elevenpence. That must do for to-day and to-morrow. Esther is going to bring in the rusks for Georgey. (*Takes up slate.*) Three, five — eight, and four — twelve, one shilling — father can only have twopence. 15
(*This all to be said in one breath.*) He must make do with that till Saturday, when I get my salary. If Esther gets the engagement, I shan't have many more salaries to take; I shall leave the stage and retire into private life. I wonder if I 20 shall like private life, and if private life will like me. It will seem so strange being no longer Miss Mary Eccles — but Mrs. Samuel Gerridge. (*Writes it on slate.*) “Mrs. Samuel Gerridge.” (*Laughs bashfully.*) La! to think of my being Mrs. 25 Anybody! How annoyed Susan Smith will be! (*Writing on slate.*) “Mrs. Samuel Gerridge presents her compliments to Miss Susan Smith, and Mrs. Samuel Gerridge requests the favour of Miss Susan Smith's company to tea, on Tuesday 30 evening next, at Mrs. Samuel Gerridge's house.” (*Pause.*) Poor Susan! (*Beginning again.*) “P. S. — Mrs. Samuel Gerridge — ”

Knock heard at room door; Polly starts.

Sam (without). Polly, open the door.

Polly. Sam! come in.

Sam (without). I can't.

Polly. Why not?

Sam. I've got somethin' on my 'ead.

Polly rises and opens door. Sam enters, carrying two rolls of wall-paper, one in each hand, and a small table on his head, which he deposits down stage, then puts roll of paper on piano, as also his cap. Sam has a rule-pocket in corduroys.

Polly (*shuts door*). What's that?

Sam (*pointing to table with pride*). Furniture. 40
How are you, my Polly? (*Kissing her.*) You look handsomer than ever this morning. (*Dances and sings.*) "Tid-dle-di-tum-ti-di-do."

Polly. What's the matter, Sam? Are you mad?

Sam. No, 'appy — much the same thing. 45

Polly. Where have you been these two days?

Sam (*all excitement*). That's just what I'm goin' to tell yer. Polly, my pet, my brightest batswing and most brilliant burner, what do yer think? 50

Polly. Oh, do go on, Sam, or I'll slap your face.

Sam. Well, then, you've 'eard me speak of old Binks, the plumber, glazier, and gasfitter, who died six months ago? 55

Polly. Yes.

Sam (*sternly and deliberately*). I've bought 'is business.

Polly. No!

Sam (*excitedly*). Yes, of 'is widow, old Mrs. 60

Binks — so much down, and so much more at the end of the year.

(*Dances and sings.*) Ri-ti-toodle
Roodle-oodle
Ri-ti-tooral-lay.

65

~~Polly.~~ La, Sam —

Sam (*pacing stage up and down*). Yes; I've bought the goodwill, fixtures, fittin's, stock, rolls of gas-pipe, and sheets of lead. (*Jumps on table, quickly facing Polly.*) Yes, Polly, I'm a tradesman with a shop — a master tradesman. (*Coming to Polly seriously.*) All I want to complete the premises is a missus.

Tries to kiss her. She pushes him away.

Polly. Sam, don't be foolish.

Sam (*arm round her waist*). Come and be Mrs. Sam Gerridge, Polly, my patent-safety-day-and-night-light. You'll furnish me completely.

Polly goes up, Sam watching her admiringly; he then sees slate, snatches it up and looks at it. She snatches it from him with a shriek, and rubs out the writing, looking daggers at him, Sam laughing.

Sam. Only to think now.

Putting arm round her waist. Polly pouting.

Polly. Don't be a goose.

Sam (*going towards table*). I spent the whole of yesterday lookin' up furniture. Now I bought that a bargain, and I brought it 'ere to show you

80

for your approval. I've bought lots of other things, and I'll bring 'em all 'ere to show you for your approval. 85

Polly. I couldn't think what had become of you. *Seated right of table.*

Sam. Couldn't yer? Oh, I say, I want yer to choose the new paper for the little back-parlour just behind the shop, you know. Now what 90 d'yer think of this?

Fetching a pattern from piano and unrolling it.

Polly. No, I don't like that. (*Sam fetches the other, a flaming pattern.*) Ah! that's neat.

Sam. Yes, that's neat and quiet. I'll newspaper it, and new-furnish it, and it shall all be 95 bran-new. *Puts paper on top of piano.*

Polly. But won't it cost a lot of money?

Sam (bravely). I can work for it. With customers in the shop, and you in the back-parlour, I can work like fifty men. (*Sits on table, beckons 100 Polly to him; she comes left of table, Sam puts his arm round Polly, sentimentally.*) Only fancy, at night, when the shop's closed, and the shutters are up, counting out the till together! (*Changing his manner.*) Besides, that isn't all I've been doin'. I've been writin', and what I've written, I've got 105 printed.

Polly. No!

Sam. True.

Polly. You've been writing — about me?

Delighted.

Sam. No — about the shop. (*Polly disgusted.*) 110
Here it is. (*Takes roll of circulars from pocket of his canvas slop.*) Yer mustn't laugh — yer know — it's my first attempt. I wrote it the night before last; and when I thought of you the words seemed to flow like — red-hot solder. (*Reads.*) 115
Hem! "Samuel Gerridge takes this opportunity of informin' the nobility, gentry, and inhabitants of the Borough-road —"

Polly. The Borough-road?

Sam. Well, there ain't many of the nobility 120
and gentry as lives in the Borough-road, but it pleases the inhabitants to make 'em believe yer think so (*resuming*) — "of informin' the nobility, gentry and inhabitants of the Borough-road, and its vicinity" — and "its vicinity." (*Looking at* 125
her.) Now I think that's rather good, eh?

Polly. Yes. (*Doubtfully.*) I've heard worse.

Sam. I first thought of saying neighbour'ood; but then vicinity sounds so much more genteel (*resuming*) — "and its vicinity, that 'e has en- 130
tered upon the business of the late Mr. Binks, 'is relict, the present Mrs. B., 'avin' disposed to 'im of the same" — now listen, Polly, because it gets interestin' — "S. G. —"

Polly. S. G. Who's he?

Sam (looking at Polly with surprise). Why, me. S. G. — Samuel Gerridge — me, us. We're S. G. Now don't interrupt me, or you'll cool my metal, and then I can't work. "S. G. 'opes that, by a constant attention to business, and" — 140 mark this — "by supplyin' the best articles at the most reasonable prices, to merit a continuance of those favours which it will ever be 'is constant study to deserve." There! (*Turning on table triumphantly.*) Stop a bit, — there's a 145 little bit more yet. "Bell-'angin', gas-fittin', plumbin', and glazin', as usual." There! and it's all my own!

Puts circular on mantel-piece, and crossing contemplates it.

Polly. Beautiful, Sam. It looks very attractive from here, don't it? 150

Sam. (Postman's knock.) There's the postman. I'll go. I shall send some of these out by post.

Goes off and returns with letter.

Polly (taking it). Oh, for Esther. I know who it's from. (*Places letter on mantel-piece. At chair left of table. Sam sits corner of table, reading circular. Seriously.*) Sam, who do you think was here last 155 night?

Sam. Who?

Polly. Captain Hawtree.

Sam (deprecatingly). Oh, 'im! — Come back from India, I suppose. 160

Polly. Yes, — luckily Esther was out.

Sam. I never liked that long swell. He was a 'uppish, conceited —

Polly (sitting at end of table). Oh, he's better than he used to be — he's a major now. He's ¹⁶⁵ only been in England a fortnight.

Sam. Did he tell yer anything about De Alroy?

Polly (leaning against table end). Yes; he said he was riding out not far from the cantonment, ¹⁷⁰ and was surrounded by a troop of Sepoy cavalry, which took him prisoner, and galloped off with him.

Sam. But about 'is death?

Polly. Oh! (*hiding her face*) that he said was ¹⁷⁵ believed to be too terrible to mention.

Sam (crossing to Polly at table). Did 'e tell yer anything else?

Polly. No; he asked a lot of questions, and I told him everything. How poor Esther had ¹⁸⁰ taken her widowhood and what a dear good baby the baby was, and what a comfort to us all, and how Esther had come back to live with us again.

Sam (sharply). And the reason for it? ¹⁸⁵

Polly (looking down). Yes.

Sam. How your father got all the money that 'e'd left for Esther?

Polly (sharply). Don't say any more about that, Sam.

190

Sam. Oh! I only think Captain 'Awtree ought to know where the money *did* go to, and you shouldn't try and screen your father, and let 'im suppose that you and Esther spent it all.

Polly. I told him — I told him — I told him.

195

Angrily.

Sam. Did you tell 'im that your father was always at 'armonic meetin's at taverns, and 'ad 'arf cracked 'isself with drink, and was always singin' the songs and makin' the speeches 'e 'eard there, and was always goin' on about 'is wrongs as one of the workin' classes? 'E's a pretty one for one of the workin' classes, 'e is! 'Asn't done a stroke of work these twenty year. Now, I *am* one of the workin' classes, but I *don't* 'owl about it. I work, I don't spout.

200

205

Polly. Hold your tongue, Sam. I won't have you say any more against poor father. He has his faults, but he's a very clever man. *Sighing.*

Sam. Ah! What else did Captain Hawtree say?

210

Polly. He advised us to apply to Mr. D'Alroy's mother.

Sam. What! the Marquissy? And what did you say to that?

Polly. I said that Esther wouldn't hear of it.

215

And so the Major said that he'd write to Esther, and I suppose this is the letter.

Sam. Now, Polly, come along and choose the paper for the little back-parlour.

Going to table and taking it up to wall behind door.

Polly (rising). Can't. Who's to mind baby? 220

Sam. The baby? Oh, I forgot all about 'im. (*Goes to cradle.*) I see yer! (*Goes to window casually.*) There's your father comin' down the street. Won't 'e mind 'im?

Polly (going up). I daresay he will. If I 225
promise him an extra sixpence on Saturday.
(*Sam opens window.*) Hi! Father!

Polly goes to cradle.

Sam (aside). 'E looks down in the mouth, 'e does. I suppose 'e's 'ad no drink this morning.

Goes to Polly.

Enter Eccles in shabby black. Pauses on entering, looks at Sam, turns away in disgust, takes off bat, places it on piano, and shambles across stage. Taking chair, places it, and sits before fire.

Polly (goes to Eccles). Come in to stop a bit, 230
father?

Eccles. No; not for long. (*Sam comes down.*)
Good morning, Samuel. Going back to work?
that's right, my boy, — stick to it. (*Pokes fire.*)
Stick to it — nothing like it.

Sam (aside). Now, isn't that too bad? No, Mr. Eccles. I've knocked off for the day.

Eccles (waving poker). That's bad, — that's very bad! Nothing like work — for the young. I don't work so much as I used to, myself, but ²⁴⁰ I like to (*Polly sitting on corner of table up left*) see the young 'uns at it. It does me good, and it does them good, too. What does the poet say?

Rising, impressively, and leaning on table.

“ A carpenter said tho' that was well spoke,
It was better by far to defend it with hoak. 245
A currier, wiser than both put together,
Said say what you will, there is nothing like labour.
For a' that, and a' that,
Your ribbon, gown and a' that,
The rank is but the guinea stamp, 250
The working man's the gold for a' that.”

Sits again, triumphantly wagging his head.

Sam (aside). This is one of the public-house loafers, that wants all the wages and none of the work, an idle old —

Goes in disgust to piano, puts on cap, and takes rolls of paper under his arm.

Polly (to Eccles). Esther will be in by-and-by. ²⁵⁵
(*Persuasively.*) Do, father.

Eccles. No, no, I tell you I won't!

Polly (whispering, arm round his neck). And I'll give you sixpence extra on Saturday.

Eccles's face relaxes into a broad grin. Polly gets bat and cloak.

Eccles. Ah! you sly little puss, you know ²⁶⁰ how to get over your poor old father.

Sam (aside). Yes, with sixpence.

Polly (putting on bonnet and cloak at door). Give the cradle a rock if baby cries.

Sam (crossing to Eccles). If you should 'appen ²⁶⁵ to want employment or amusement, Mr. Eccles, just cast your eye over this. (*Puts circular on table, then joins Polly at door.*) Stop a bit, I've forgot to give the baby one.

Throws circular into cradle. Exeunt, Polly first. Eccles takes out pipe from pocket, looks into it, then blows through it making a squeaking noise, and finishes by tenderly placing it on table. He then bunts all his pockets for tobacco, finally finding a little paper packet containing a screw of tobacco in his waistcoat pocket, which he also places on table after turning up the corner of the tablecloth for the purpose of emptying the contents of his pocket of the few remnants of past screws of tobacco on to the bare table and mixing a little out of the packet with it and filling pipe. He then brushes all that remains on the table into the paper packet, pinches it up, and carefully replaces it in waistcoat pocket. Having put the pipe into his mouth, he looks about for a light, across his shoulder and under table, though never rising from

the chair ; seeing nothing, his face assumes an expression of comic anguish. Turning to table he angrily replaces tablecloth and then notices Sam's circular. His face relaxes into a smile, and picking it up he tears the circular in half, makes a spill of it, and lighting it at fire, stands, with his back to fireplace, and smokes vigorously.

Eccles. Poor Esther! Nice market she's²⁷⁰ brought her pigs to — ugh! Mind the baby indeed! What good is he to me? That fool of a girl to throw away all her chances! — a *honourable-hess* — and her father not to have on him the price of a pint of early beer or a quart-²⁷⁵ ern of cool, refreshing gin! Stopping in here to rock a young honourable! Cuss him!

Business, puffs smoke in baby's face, rocking cradle.

Are we slaves, we working men? (*Sings savagely.*)
“Britons never, never, never shall be—” (*Nodding his head sagaciously, sits by table.*) I won't²⁸⁰ stand this, I've writ to the old cat — I mean to the Marquissy — to tell her that her daughter-in-law and her grandson is almost starving. That fool Esther is too proud to write to her for money. I hate pride — it's *beastly*! (*Rising.*)²⁸⁵ There's no beastly pride about me. (*Goes up, smacking his lips.*) I'm as dry as a lime-kiln.

(*Takes up jug.*) Milk! — (*with disgust*) for this young aristocratic pauper. Everybody in the house is sacrificed for him! (*At foot of cradle, 290 with arms on chair back.*) And to think that a *working man*, and a member of the Committee of Banded Brothers for the Regeneration of Human Kind, by means of equal diffusion of intelligence and equal division of property, 295 should be thusty, while this cub — (*Draws aside curtain, and looks at child. After a pause —*) That there coral he's got round his neck is gold, real gold! (*With hand on knob at end of cradle.*) Oh, Society! Oh, Governments! Oh, Class Legis- 300 lation! — *is this right?* Shall this mindless wretch enjoy himself, while sleeping, with a jewelled gawd, and his poor old grandfather want the price of half a pint? *No!* it shall not be! Rather than see it, I will myself resent 305 this outrage on the rights of man! and in this holy crusade of class against class, of the weak and lowly against the *powerful and strong* — (*pointing to child*) — I will strike one blow for freedom! (*Goes to back of cradle.*) He's asleep. 310 It will fetch ten bob round the corner; and if the Marquissy gives us anything it can be got out with some o' that. (*Steals coral.*) Lie still, my darling! — it's grandfather a-watchin' over you —

“ Who ran to catch me when I fell,
And kicked the place to make it well?
My grandfather ! ”

Rocking cradle with one hand; leaves it quickly, and as he takes hat off piano Esther enters. She is dressed as a widow, her face pale, and her manner quick and imperious. She carries a parcel and paper bag of rusks in her hand; she puts parcel on table, goes to cradle, kneels down and kisses child.

Eccles. My lovey had a nice walk? You should wrap yourself up well,—you are so ³²⁰ liable to catch cold.

Esther. My Georgy? — Where’s his coral? (*Eccles, going to door, fumbles with lock nervously, and is going out as Esther speaks.*) Gone! — Father! (*Rising — Eccles stops.*) The child’s coral — where is it? 325

Eccles (confused). Where’s what, ducky?

Esther. The coral! You’ve got it,—I know it! Give it me! (*Quickly and imperiously.*) Give it me! (*Eccles takes coral from his pocket and gives it back.*) If you dare to touch my child — ~~326~~

Goes to cradle.

Eccles. Esther! (*Going quickly to piano and banging hat on it.*) Am I not your father? —

Esther gets round to front of table.

Esther. And I am his mother!

Eccles (coming to her). Do you bandy words with me, you pauper, you pauper!!! to whom³³⁵ I have given shelter — shelter to you and your brat! I've a good mind —

Raising his clenched fist.

Esther (confronting him). If you dare! I am no longer your little drudge — your frightened servant. When mother died — (*Eccles changes*³⁴⁰ *countenance and cowers beneath her glance*) — and I was so high, I tended you, and worked for you — and you beat me. That time is past. I am a woman — I am a wife — a widow — a mother! Do you think I will let you outrage him?³⁴⁵ Touch me if you dare! *Advancing a step.*

Eccles (bursting into tears and coming down). And this is my own child, which I nussed when a babby, and sang "Cootsicum Coo" to afore she could speak. (*Gets hat from piano, and returns*³⁵⁰ *a step or two.*) Hon. Mrs. De Alroy (*Esther drops down behind chair by table*), I forgive you for all that you have said. I forgive you for all that you have done. In everything that I have done I have acted with the best intentions.³⁵⁵ May the babe in that cradle never treat you as you have this day tret a grey 'aired father. May he never cease to love and honour you, as you have ceased to love and honour me, after all that I have done for you, and the position to³⁶⁰

which I have raised you by my own *industry*.
(*Goes to door.*) May he never behave to you
like the bad daughters of King Lear ; and may
you never live to feel how much more sharper
than a serpent's (*slight pause as if remembering* 365
quotation) scale it is to have a thankless child !

Exit.

Esther (kneeling back of cradle). My darling !
(*Arranging bed and placing coral to baby's lips, then*
to her own.) Mamma's come back to her own.
Did she stay away from him so long ? (*Rises, and*
looks at sabre, etc.) My George ! to think that 370
you can never look upon his face or hear his
voice. My brave, gallant, handsome husband !
My lion and my love ! (*Comes down, pacing stage.*)
Oh ! to be a soldier, and to fight the wretches
who destroyed him — who took my darling from 375
me ! (*Action of cutting with sabre.*) To gallop
miles upon their upturned faces. (*Crossing with*
action, breaks down sobbing at mantel-piece; sees letter.)
What's this ? Captain Hawtree's hand. (*Sitting*
in chair, reads, at left hand of table.) " My dear
Mrs. D'Alroy, — I returned to England less 380
than a fortnight ago. I have some papers and
effects of my poor friend's, which I am anxious
to deliver to you, and I beg of you to name a
day when I can call with them and see you ; at
the same time let me express my deepest sym- 385

pathy with your affliction. Your husband's loss was mourned by every man in the regiment. (*Esther lays the letter on her heart, and then resumes reading.*) I have heard with great pain of the pecuniary embarrassments into which accident and imprudence of others have placed you. I trust you will not consider me, one of poor George's oldest comrades and friends, either intrusive or impertinent in sending the enclosed (*she takes out a cheque*), and in hoping that, should any further difficulties arise, you will inform me of them, and remember that I am, dear Mrs. D'Alroy, now, and always, your faithful and sincere friend, Arthur Hawtree." (*Esther goes to cradle and bends over it.*) Oh, his boy, if you could read it!

Sobs, with head on head of cradle. 400

Enter Polly.

Polly. Father gone!

Esther. Polly, you look quite flurried.

Polly laughs and whispers to Esther.

Esther (near head of table, taking Polly in her arms and kissing her). So soon? Well, my darling, I hope you may be happy.

405

Polly. Yes. Sam's going to speak to father about it this afternoon. (*Crosses round table, putting rusks in saucepan.*) Did you see the agent, dear?

Esther (sits by table). Yes; the manager didn't come — he broke his appointment again.

Polly (sits opposite at table). Nasty, rude fellow !

Esther. The agent said it didn't matter, he thought I should get the engagement. He'll only give me thirty shillings a week, though. 415

Polly. But you said that two pounds was the regular salary.

Esther. Yes, but they know I'm poor, and want the engagement, and so take advantage of me. 420

Polly. Never mind, Esther. I put the dress in that bandbox. It looks almost as good as new.

Esther. I've had a letter from Captain Hawtree. 425

Polly. I know, dear ; he came here last night.

Esther. A dear, good letter — speaking of George, and enclosing a cheque for thirty pounds.

Polly. Oh, how kind ! Don't you tell father. 430

Noise of carriage-wheels without.

Esther. I shan't.

Eccles enters, breathless. Esther and Polly rise.

Eccles. It's the Marquissy in her coach. (*Esther puts on the lid of bandbox.*) Now, girls, do be civil to her, and she may do something for us. (*Places hat on piano.*) I see the coach as I was 435 coming out of the "Rainbow."

Hastily pulls an old comb out of his pocket, and puts his hair in order.

Esther. The Marquise !

Esther comes down to end of table, Polly holding her hand.

Eccles (at door). This way, my lady — up them steps. They're rather awkward for the likes o' you ; but them as is poor and lowly must do as ⁴⁴⁰ best they can with steps and circumstances.

Enter Marquise. She surveys the place with aggressive astonishment.

Marquise (going down, half aside). What a hole ! And to think that my grandson should breathe such an atmosphere, and be contaminated by such associations ! (*To Eccles, who is a little up.*) ⁴⁴⁵ Which is the young woman who married my son ?

Esther. I am Mrs. George D'Alroy, widow of George D'Alroy. Who are you ?

Mar. I am his mother, the Marquise de St. ⁴⁵⁰ Maur.

Esther (with the grand air). Be seated, I beg.

Eccles takes chair from right centre, which Esther immediately seizes as Sam enters with an easy-chair on his head, which he puts down, not seeing Marquise, who instantly sits down in it, concealing it completely.

Sam (astonished). It's the Marquissy ! (*Looking at her.*) My eyes ! These aristocrats are fine

women — plenty of 'em — (*describing circle*) quality and quantity!

Polly. Go away, Sam; you'd better come back.

Eccles nudges him and bustles him towards door. Exit Sam. Eccles shuts door on him.

Eccles (*coming down right of Marquise, rubbing his hands*). If we'd a know'd your ladyship 'ad been a-coming we'd a' 'ad the place cleaned up a bit. 460

With hands on chair back, in lower right corner of stage. He gets round to right, behind Marquise, who turns the chair slightly from him.

Polly. Hold your tongue, father!

Eccles crushed.

Mar. (*to Esther*). You remember me, do you not?

Esther. Perfectly, though I only saw you once. (*Seating herself en grande dame.*) May I ask what 465 has procured me the honour of this visit?

Mar. I was informed that you were in want, and I came to offer you assistance.

Esther. I thank you for your offer, and the delicate consideration for my feelings with which 470 it is made. I need no assistance.

Eccles groans and leans on piano.

Mar. A letter that I received last night informed me that you did.

Esther. May I ask if that letter came from Captain Hawtree?

Mar. No — from this person — your father, I think.

Esther (to Eccles). How dare you interfere in my affairs?

Eccles. My lovey, I did it with the best inten-480
tions.

Mar. Then you will not accept assistance from me?

Esther. No.

Polly (aside to Esther, holding her hand). Bless485
you, my darling. *Polly standing beside her.*

Mar. But you have a child — a son — my grandson.
With emotion.

Esther. Master D'Alroy wants for nothing.

Polly (aside). And never shall.490
Eccles groans and turns on to piano.

Mar. I came here to propose that my grandson should go back with me.

Polly rushes up to cradle.

Esther (rising defiantly). What! part with my boy! I'd sooner die!

Mar. You can see him when you wish. As495
for money, I —

Esther. Not for ten thousand million worlds — not for ten thousand million marchionesses!

Eccles. Better do what the good lady asks you, my dear; she's advising you for your own500
good, and for the child's likewise.

Mar. Surely you cannot intend to bring up my son's son in a place like this?

Esther. I do.

Goes up to cradle.

Eccles. It is a poor place, and we are poor⁵⁰⁵ people, sure enough. We ought not to fly in the faces of our pastors and masters — our pastresses and mistresses.

Polly (aside). Oh, hold your tongue, do!

Up at cradle.

Esther (before cradle). Master George D'Alroy⁵¹⁰ will remain with his mother. The offer to take him from her is an insult to his dead father and to him.

Eccles (aside). He don't seem to feel it, stuck-up little beast.

⁵¹⁵

Mar. But you have no money — how can you rear him? — how can you educate him? — how can you live?

Esther (tearing dress from bandbox). Turn columbine, — go on the stage again and dance.

⁵²⁰

Mar. (rising). You are insolent — you forget that I am a lady.

Esther. You forget that I am a mother. Do you dare to offer to buy my child — *his* breathing image, *his* living memory — with money?⁵²⁵ (*Crosses to door and throws it open.*) There is the door — go!

Picture.

Eccles (to Marquise, who has risen, aside). Very

sorry, my lady, as you should be tret in this way,
which was not my wishes. 530

Mar. Silence! (*Eccles retreats, putting back chair. Marquise goes up to door.*) Mrs. D'Alroy, if anything could have increased my sorrow for the wretched marriage my poor son was *decoyed* into, it would be your conduct this day to his mother. 535

Exit.

Esther (*falling into Polly's arms*). Oh, Polly! Polly!

Eccles (*looking after her*). To go away and not to leave a sov. behind her! (*Running up to open door.*) Cat! Cat! Stingy old cat! 540

Almost runs to fire, and pokes it violently; carriage-wheels heard without.

Esther. I'll go to my room and lie down. Let me have the baby, or that old woman may come back and steal him.

Exit Esther, and Polly follows with baby.

Eccles. Well, women is the obstinatest devils as never wore horse-shoes. Children? Beasts! 545
Beasts!

Enter Sam and Polly.

Sam. Come along, Polly, and let's get it over at once. (*Sam places cap on piano, and goes to table. Polly takes handbox from table, and places it up stage.*) Now, Mr. Eccles (*Eccles turns suddenly, facing Sam*), since you've been talkin' on family mat-550

ters, I'd like to 'ave a word with yer, so take this opportunity to —

Eccles (waving his hand grandly). Take what you like, and then order more (rising and leaning over table), Samuel Gerridge. That hand is a 555
hand that has never turned its back on a friend,
or a bottle to give him. *Sings, front of table.*

I'll stand by my friend,

I'll stand by my friend,

I'll stand by my friend,

560

If he'll stand to me — me, gentlemen !

Sam. Well, Mr. Eccles, sir, it's this —

Polly (aside, coming down to Sam). Don't tell him too sudden, Sam — it might shock his feel-
ings. 565

Sam. It's this ; yer know that for the last four years I've been keepin' company with Mary — Polly.

Turning to her and smiling. Eccles drops into chair as if shot.

Eccles. Go it ! go it ! strike home, young man ! Strike on this grey head ! (Sings.) " Britons, 570 strike home ! " Here (tapping his chest), to my heart ! Don't spare me ! Have a go at my grey hairs. Pull 'em — pull 'em out ! A long pull, and a strong pull, and a pull all together !

Cries, and drops his face on arm on table.

Polly. Oh, father ! I wouldn't hurt your feel- 575
ings for the world. *Patting his head.*

Don't

Sam. No, Mr. Eccles, I don't want to 'urt your feelin's, but I'm a-goin' to enter upon a business. Here's a circular. *Offering one.*

Eccles (indignantly). Circ'lars. What are cir-580 c'lars? — compared to a father's feelings?

Sam. And I want Polly to name the day, sir, and so I ask you —

Eccles. This is 'ard, this is 'ard. One of my daughters marries a soger. The other goes 585 a-gasfitting.

Sam (annoyed). The business which will enable me to maintain a wife is that of the late Mr. Binks, plumber, glazier, etc.

Eccles (rising, sings. Air, "Lost Rosabelle"). 590

"They have given thee to a plumber,
They have broken every vow,
They have given thee to a plumber,
And my heart, my heart is breaking now."

Drops into chair again.

Now, gentlemen!

Sam thrusts circulars into his pocket, and 595 turns away angrily.

Polly. You know, father, you can come and see me. *Leans over him.*

Sam (sotto voce). No, no. *Motions to Polly.*

Eccles (looking up). So I can, and that's a comfort. (*Shaking her hand.*) And you can come and 600 see me, and that's a comfort. I'll come and see

you often — very often — every day (*Sam turns up stage in horror*), and crack a fatherly bottle (*rising*), and shed a friendly tear.

Wipes eyes with dirty pocket-handkerchief, which he pulls from breast pocket.

Polly. Do, father, do.

605

Goes up and gets tea-tray.

Sam (*with a gulp*). Yes, Mr. Eccles, do.

Goes to Polly and gesticulates behind tray.

Eccles. I will. (*Goes to centre of stage.*) And this it is to be a father. I would part with any of my children for their own good, readily — if I was paid for it. (*Goes to right corner ; sings.*) 610
“For I know that the angels are whispering to me” — me, gentlemen! *Polly gets tea-things.*

Sam. I'll try and make Polly a good husband, and anything that I can do to prove it (*lowering his voice*), in the way of spirituous liquors and 615 tobacco (*slipping coin into his hand, unseen by Polly*) shall be done.

Eccles (*lightening up and placing his left hand on Sam's head*).

“Be kind to thy father,

Wherever you be,

620

For he is a blessing

And credit to thee” — thee, gentlemen.

(*Gets to centre of stage.*) Well, my children — bless you, take the blessing of a grey-haired father.

(*Polly looking from one to the other.*) Samuel Ger-⁶²⁵
ridge, she shall be thine. (*Mock heroically, looking*
at money.) You shall be his wife (*looking at Polly*)
and you (*looking at Sam*) shall be her husband —
for a husband I know no fitter — no “gas-fitter”
man. (*Runs to piano and takes bat; goes to door,*⁶³⁰
looks comically pathetic at Sam and Polly, puts on bat
and comes towards centre of stage.) I’ve a friend
waiting for me round the corner, which I want
to have a word with; and may you never know
how much more sharper than a serpent’s tooth
it is to have a marriageable daughter.

635

(*Sings.*) “When I heard she was married,

I breathed not a tone,

The heyes of all round me

Was fixed on my h’own;

I flew to my chamber

640

To hide my despair,

I tore the bright circlet

Of gems from my hair.

When I heard she was married,

When I heard she was married — ”

645

Breaks down. Exit.

Polly (drying her eyes). There, Sam. I always
told you that though father had his faults, his
heart was in the right place.

Breaks down. Exit. This exit was afterwards abandoned with
the author’s permission, being somewhat of an anti-climax. The
exit is usually made at the words “marriageable daughter,” Eccles
breaking down in a comically hysterical manner and going out
quickly.

Sam. Poor Polly.

Crosses to fireplace. Knock at door.

Polly (*top of table*). Come in.

650

Enter Hawtree.

Polly. Major Hawtree.

Sam turns away as they shake hands.

Hawtree. I met the Marquise's carriage on the bridge. Has she been here?

Sam at fire, with back to it.

Polly. Yes.

Haw. What happened?

655

Polly. Oh, she wanted to take away the child.

At head of table.

Sam. In the coach.

Polly sets tea-things.

Haw. And what did Mrs. D'Alroy say to that?

Sam. Mrs. D'Alroy said that she'd see 'er 660
blowed first! (*Polly pushes Sam*) — or words to that effect.

Haw. I'm sorry to hear this; I had hoped — however, that's over.

Polly (*sitting at table*). Yes, it's over; and I 665
hope we shall hear no more about it. Want to take away the child, indeed — like her impudence! What next! (*Getting ready tea-things.*) Esther's gone to lie down. I shan't wake her up for tea, though she's had nothing to eat all day. 670

Sam (*head of table*). Shall I fetch some shrimps?

Polly. No. What made you think of shrimps?

Sam. They're a relish, and consolin' — at least I always found 'em so. 675

Check lights, gradually.

Polly. I won't ask you to take tea with us, Major, — you're too grand.

Sam motions approbation to Polly, not wanting Hawtree to remain.

Haw. (*placing bat on piano*). Not at all. I shall be most happy. (*Aside.*) 'Pon my word, these are very good sort of people. I'd no idea — 680

Sam (*points to Hawtree*). He's a-goin' to stop to tea, — well, I ain't.

Goes up to window and sits. Hawtree crosses and sits opposite Polly at table.

Polly. Sam! Sam! (*Pause — he says Eh?*) Pull down the blind and light the gas.

Sam. No, don't light up; I like this sort of 685 dusk. It's unbusiness-like, but pleasant.

Sam cuts enormous slice of bread and hands it on point of knife to Hawtree. Cuts small lump of butter and hands it on point of knife to Hawtree, who looks at it through eye-glass, then takes it. Sam then helps himself. Polly meantime has poured out tea in two cups, and one saucer for Sam, sugars them, and then hands cup and saucer to Hawtree, who has both hands full.

He takes it awkwardly and places it on table. Polly, having only one spoon, tastes Sam's tea, then stirs Hawtree's, attracting his attention by doing so. He looks into his tea-cup. Polly stirs her own tea, and drops spoon into Hawtree's cup, causing it to spurt in his eye. He drops eye-glass and wipes his eyes.

Polly (making tea). Sugar, Sam! (Sam takes tea and sits facing fire.) Oh, there isn't any milk — it'll be here directly, it's just his time.

Voice (outside; rattle of milk-pails). Mia-ooow! 690

Polly. There he is. (Knock at door.) Oh, I know; I owe him fourpence. (Feeling in her pocket.) Sam, have you got fourpence?

Knock again, louder.

Sam. No (his mouth full), — I ain't got no fourpence. 695

Polly. He's very impatient. Come in!

Enter George, his face bronzed, and in full health. He carries a milk-can in his hand, which, after putting his hat on piano, he places on table.

George. A fellow hung this on the railings, so I brought it in. X

Polly sees him, and gradually sinks down under table on one side. Then Sam, with his mouth full, and bread and butter in hand, does the same on the other. Hawtree pushes himself back a space, in chair; remains motionless.

George astonished. Picture.

Geo. What's the matter with you?

Haw. (rising). George!

700

Geo. Hawtree! You here?

Polly (under table). O-o-o-h! the ghost! the ghost!

Sam. It shan't hurt you, Polly. Perhaps it's only indigestion.

705

Haw. Then you are not dead?

Geo. Dead, no. Where's my wife?

Haw. You were reported killed.

Geo. It wasn't true.

Haw. Alive! My old friend alive!

710

Geo. And well. (*Shakes hands.*) Landed this morning. Where's my wife?

Sam (*who has popped his head from under the table-cloth*). He ain't dead, Poll, — he's alive.

Polly rises from under table slowly.

Polly (*pause; approaches him, touches him, retreats*). George! (*He nods.*) George! George!

715

Geo. Yes! Yes!

Polly. Alive! My dear George! Oh, my brother! (*Looking at him intensely.*) Alive! (*Going to him.*) Oh, my dear, dear brother! (*In his arms*) — how could you go and do so? *Laughs hysterically.*

720

Sam goes to Polly. George places Polly in Sam's arms. Sam kisses Polly's hand violently.

Hawtree comes up, stares — business. Sam with a stamp of his foot moves away.

Geo. Where's Esther?

Haw. Here, — in this house.

Geo. Here ! — doesn't she know I'm back ?

Polly. No, — how should she ? 725

Geo. (*to Hawtree*). Didn't you get my telegram ?

Haw. No ; where from ?

Geo. Southampton ! I sent it to the Club.

Haw. I haven't been there these three days. 730

Polly (*bysterically*). Oh, my dear, dear, dear dead-and-gone, come-back-all-alive-oh, brother George !

George passes her.

Sam. Glad to see yer, sir.

Geo. Thank you, Gerridge. (*Shakes bands.*) 735
Same to you — but Esther ?

Polly (*back to audience, and 'kerchief to her eyes*).
She's asleep in her room.

George is going ; Polly stops him.

Polly. You mustn't see her.

Geo. Not see her ! — after this long absence ! 740
— why not ?

Haw. She's ill to-day. She has been greatly excited. The news of your death, which we all mourned, has shaken her terribly.

Geo. Poor girl ! Poor girl ! 745

Polly. Oh, we all cried so when you died ! —
(*crying*) — and now you're alive again, I want to cry ever so much more. *Crying.*

Haw. We must break the news to her gently and by degrees. 750

Crosses behind, to fire, taking his tea with him.

Sam. Yes, if you turn the tap on to full pressure, she'll explode.

Sam turns to Hawtree, who is just raising cup to his lips and brings it down on saucer with a bang; both annoyed.

Geo. To return, and not to be able to see her — to love her — to kiss her! *Stamps.*

Polly. Hush!

755

Geo. I forgot — I shall wake her!

Polly. More than that, — you'll wake the baby.

Geo. Baby! — what baby?

Polly. Yours.

Geo. Mine? — mine?

760

Polly. Yes, — yours and Esther's. Why, didn't you know there was a baby?

Geo. No!

Polly. La! the ignorance of these men!

Haw. Yes, George, you're a father.

765

At fireplace.

Geo. Why wasn't I told of this? Why didn't you write?

Polly. How could we when you were dead?

Sam. And 'adn't left your address.

Looks at Hawtree, who turns away quickly.

Geo. If I can't see Esther, I will see the child. 770
The sight of me won't be too much for its nerves.
Where is it?

Polly. Sleeping in its mother's arms. (*George*

goes to door — she intercepts him.) Please not!
Please not!

775

Geo. I must! I will!

Polly. It might kill her, and you wouldn't like to do that. I'll fetch the baby; but, oh, please don't make a noise. (*Going up.*) You won't make a noise — you'll be as quiet as you can, won't you? Oh! I can't believe it!

Exit Polly. Sam dances break-down and finishes up by looking at Hawtree, who turns away astonished. Sam disconcerted; sits on chair by table; George at door.

Geo. My baby — my ba — It's a dream!
(*To Sam.*) You've seen it — What's it like?

Sam. Oh! it's like a — like a sort of — infant — white and — milky, and all that.

785

Enter Polly with baby wrapped in shawl; George shuts door and meets her.

Polly. Gently! gently, — take care! Esther will hardly have it touched.

Sam rises and gets near to George.

Geo. But I'm its father.

Polly. That don't matter. She's very particular.

790

Geo. Boy or girl?

Polly. Guess.

Geo. Boy! (*Polly nods. George proud.*) What's his name?

Polly. Guess.

Geo. George? (*Polly nods.*) Eustace? (*Polly nods.*) Fairfax? Algernon? (*Polly nods; pause.*)
My names!

Sam (*to George*). You'd 'ardly think there was room enough in 'im to 'old so many names, 800 would yer?

Hawtree looks at him — turns to fire. Sam disconcerted again. Sits.

Geo. To come back all the way from India to find that I'm dead, and that you're alive. To find my wife a widow with a new love aged — How old are you? I'll buy you a pony to-
805
morrow, my brave little boy! What's his weight? I should say two pound nothing. My — baby — my boy! (*Bends over him and kisses him.*) Take him away, Polly, for fear I should break him. *Polly takes child, and places it in cradle.* 810

Haw. (*crosses to piano. Passes Sam, front — stares — business. Sam goes round to fireplace, flings down bread and butter in a rage and drinks his tea out of saucer*). But tell us how it is you're back — how you escaped? *Hawtree leans against piano.*

Geo. (*coming down*). By and by. Too long a story just now. Tell me all about it. (*Polly gives*
815
him chair.) How is it Esther's living here?

Polly. She came back after the baby was born, and the furniture was sold up.

Geo. Sold up? What furniture?

Polly. That you bought for her. 820

Haw. It couldn't be helped, George — Mrs. D'Alroy was so poor.

Geo. Poor! But I left her £600 to put in the bank!

Haw. We *must* tell you. She gave it to her 825 father, who banked it in his own name.

Sam. And lost it in bettin' — every copper.

Geo. Then she's been in want?

Polly. No — not in want. Friends lent her money. 830

Geo. (*seated*). What friends? (*Pause; he looks at Polly, who indicates Hawtree.*) You?

Polly. Yes.

Geo. (*rising and shaking Hawtree's hand*). Thank you, old fella. 835 *Hawtree droops his head.*

Sam (*aside*). Now who'd a thought that long swell 'ad it in 'im? 'e never mentioned it.

Geo. So Papa Eccles had the money?

Sitting again.

Sam. And blued it. *Sits on corner of table.*

Polly (*pleadingly*). You see father was very un- 840 lucky on the race-course. He told us that if it hadn't been that all his calculations were upset by a horse winning who had no business to, he should have made our fortunes. Father's been unlucky, and he gets tipsy at times, but he's a 845

very clever man, if you only give him scope enough.

Sam. I'd give 'im scope enough!

Geo. Where is he now?

Sam. Public-house.

850

Geo. And how is he?

Sam. Drunk!

Polly pushes him off table. Sam sits at fireplace up stage.

Geo. (to Hawtree). You were right. There is "something" in caste. (*Aloud.*) But tell us all about it.

Sits. 855

Polly. Well, you know, you went away; and then the baby was born. Oh! he was such a sweet little thing, just like — your eyes — your hair.

Standing by George, who is sitting.

Geo. Cut that!

860

Polly. Well, baby came; and when baby was six days old, your letter came, Major (*to Hawtree*). I saw that it was from India, and that it wasn't in your hand (*to George*); I guessed what was inside it, so I opened it unknown to her, 865 and I read there of your capture and death. I daren't tell her. I went to father to ask his advice, but he was too tipsy to understand me. Sam fetched the doctor. He told us that the news would kill her. When she woke up, she 870 said she had dreamt there was a letter from you. I told her, No; and day after day she asked for

a letter. So the doctor advised us to write one as if it came from you. So we did. Sam and I and the doctor told her — told Esther, I mean — 875 that her eyes were bad and she mustn't read, and we read our letter to her; didn't we, Sam? But, bless you! she always knew it hadn't come from you! At last, when she was stronger, we told her all. 880

Geo. (after a pause). How did she take it?

Polly. She pressed the baby in her arms, and turned her face to the wall. (*A pause.*) Well, to make a long story short, when she got up, she found father had lost all the money you had left 885 her. There was a dreadful scene between them. She told him he'd robbed her and her child, and father left the house, and swore he'd never come back again.

Sam. Don't be alarmed, — 'e did come back. 890

Sitting by fire.

Polly. Oh, yes; he was too good-hearted to stop long from his children. He has his faults, but his good points, when you find 'em, are wonderful!

Sam. Yes, when you find 'em. 895

Rises, gets bread and butter from table, and sits at corner of table.

Polly. So she had to come back here to us, and that's all.

Geo. Why didn't she write to my mother?

Polly. Father wanted her; but she was too proud — she said she'd die first. 900

Geo. (*rising, to Hawtree*). There's a woman! Caste's all humbug. (*Sees sword over mantel-piece.*) That's my sword (*crossing round*) and a map of India, and that's the piano I bought her — I'll swear to the silk. 905

Polly. Yes; that was bought in at the sale.

Geo. (*to Hawtree*). Thank ye, old fella.

Haw. Not by me — I was in India at the time.

Geo. By whom, then? 910

Polly. By Sam. (*Sam winks to her to discontinue.*) I shall! He knew Esther was breaking her heart about anyone else having it, so he took the money he'd saved up for our wedding, and we're going to be married now — ain't we, Sam? 915

Sam (*rusthing to George and pulling out circulars from his pocket*). And hope by constant attention to business, to merit —

Polly pushes him away.

Polly. Since you died it hasn't been opened, but if I don't play it to-night, may I die an old maid! 920

Goes up. George crosses to Sam, and shakes his band, then goes up stage, pulls up blind, and looks into street. Sam turns up and meets Polly by top of table.

Haw. (*aside*). Now who'd have thought that little cad had it in him? He never mentioned it. (*Aloud.*) Apropos, George, your mother — I'll go to the Square, and tell her of — 925

Takes hat from piano.

Geo. Is she in town? *At cradle.*

Haw. Yes. Will you come with me?

Geo. And leave my wife? — and such a wife!

Haw. I'll go at once. I shall catch her before dinner. Good-bye, old fellow. Seeing you back again, alive and well, makes me feel quite — that I quite feel — (*Shakes George's hand. Goes to door, then crosses to Sam, who has turned Polly's tea into his saucer, and is just about to drink; seeing Hawtree, he puts it down quickly, and turns his back.*) Mr. Gerridge, I fear I have often made myself very offensive to you. 935

Sam. Well, sir, yer 'ave.

Haw. (*at bottom of table*). I feared so. I didn't know you then. I beg your pardon. Let me ask you to shake hands — to forgive me, and forget it. *Offering his hand.* 940

Sam (*taking it*). Say no more, sir; and if ever I've made myself offensive to you, I ask your pardon; forget it and forgive me. (*They shake hands warmly; as Hawtree crosses to door, recovering from Sam's hearty shake of the hand, Sam runs to him.*) Hi, sir! When yer marry that

young lady as I know you're engaged to, if 945
you should furnish a house, and require anything in my way —

He brings out circular; begins to read it.

Polly comes down and pushes Sam away, against Hawtree. Sam goes and sits on low chair by fireplace, down stage, disconcerted, cramming circulars into his pocket.

Haw. Good-bye, George, for the present.
(*At door.*) Bye, Polly. (*Resumes his Pall Mall manner as he goes out.*) I'm off to the Square. 950
Exit Hawtree.

Geo. (at cradle). But Esther?

Polly (meets George). Oh, I forgot all about Esther. I'll tell her all about it.

Geo. How? *By door.*

Polly. I don't know; but it will come. Providence will send it to me, as it has sent you, my dear brother. (*Embracing him.*) You don't know how glad I am to see you back again! You must go. (*Pushing him. George takes hat off piano.*) Esther will be getting up directly. (*At door with 960 George, who looks through keyhole.*) It's no use looking there; it's dark.

Geo. (at door). It isn't often a man can see his own widow.

Polly. And it isn't often that he wants to! 965
Now, you must go. *Pushing him off.*

Geo. I shall stop outside.

Sam. And I'll whistle for you when you may come in.

Polly. Now — hush !

970

Geo. (*opening door wide*). Oh, my Esther, when you know I'm alive ! I'll marry you all over again, and we'll have a second honeymoon, my darling. *Exit.*

Polly. Oh, Sam, Sam ! (*Commencing to sing and dance. Sam also dances ; they meet in centre of stage, join hands, and dance around two or three times, leaving Sam on the left of Polly, near table. Polly going down.*) Oh, Sam, I'm so excited, I don't know what to do. What shall I do — what shall I do ?

Sam (*taking up Hawtree's bread and butter*). 'Ave a bit of bread and butter, Polly. 980

Polly. Now, Sam, light the gas ; I'm going to wake her up. (*Opening door.*) Oh, my darling, if I dare tell you ! (*Whispering.*) He's come back ! He's alive ! He's come back ! He's come back ! Alive ! Alive ! Alive ! Sam, 985 kiss me !

Sam rushes to Polly, kisses her, and she jumps off, Sam shutting the door.

Sam (*dances shutter-dance*). I'm glad the swells are gone ; now I can open my safety-valve, and let my feelings escape. To think of 'is comin'

back alive from India just as I am goin' to open 990
my shop. Perhaps he'll get me the patronage of
the Royal Family. It would look stunnin' over
the door, a lion and a unicorn, a-standin' on their
hind legs, doin' nothin' furiously, with a lozenge
between 'em — thus. (*Seizes plate on table, puts 995*
his left foot on chair by table, and imitates the picture
of the Royal arms.) Polly said I was to light up,
and whatever Polly says must be done. (*Lights*
brackets over mantel-piece, then candles; as he lights the
broken one, says.) Why this one is for all the world
like old Eccles! (*Places candles on piano and sits on*
music-stool.) Poor Esther! to think of my know-1000
in' her when she was in the ballet line, — then in
the 'onourable line; then a mother — no, hon-
ourables is "mammas," — then a widow, and
then in the ballet line again! — and 'im to come
back (*growing affected*) — and find a baby, with 1005
all 'is furniture and fittin's ready for immediate
use (*crossing back of table during last few lines, sits in*
chair left of table) — and she, poor thing, lyin'
asleep with 'er eye-lids 'ot and swollen, not
knowin' that that great big, 'eavy, 'ulkin', over-1010
grown dragoon is prowlin' outside, ready to fly
at 'er lips, and strangle 'er in 'is strong, lovin'
arms — it — it — it —

*Breaks down and sobs, with his head on the
table.*

Enter Polly.

Polly. Why, Sam! What's the matter?

Sam (rises and crosses). I dunno. The water's ¹⁰¹⁵
got into my meter.

Polly. Hush! Here's Esther.

Enter Esther. They stop suddenly. Polly down stage.

Sam (singing and dancing). "Tiddy-ti-tum,"
etc.

Esther (sitting near fire, taking up costume and be- 1020
ginning to work). Sam, you seem in high spirits
to-night!

Sam. Yes; yer see Polly and I are goin' to
be married — and — and 'opes by bestowing a
merit — to continue the favour — ¹⁰²⁵

Polly (who has kissed Esther two or three times).
What are you talking about?

Sam. I don't know, — I'm off my burner.

*Brings music-stool. Polly goes round to chair,
facing Esther.*

Esther. What's the matter with you to-night,
dear? (*To Polly.*) I can see something in your ¹⁰³⁰
eyes.

Sam. P'raps it's the new furniture!

Sits on music-stool.

Esther. Will you help me with the dress,
Polly?

*They sit, Esther upper end, back of table,
Polly facing her, at lower end.*

Polly. It was a pretty dress when it was new 1035
— not unlike the one Mdlle. Delphine used to
wear. (*Suddenly clasping her hands.*) Oh!

Esther. What's the matter?

Polly. A needle! (*Crosses to Sam, who examines
finger.*) I've got it! 1040

Sam. What — the needle — in your finger?

Polly. No; an idea in my head!

Sam (*still looking at her finger*). Does it 'urt?

Polly. Stupid! (*Sam still sitting on stool. Aloud.*)
Do you recollect Mdlle. Delphine, Esther? 1045

Esther. Yes.

Polly. Do you recollect her in that ballet that
old Herr Griffenhaagen arranged? — Jeanne la
Folle, or, the Return of the Soldier?

Esther. Yes; will you do the fresh hem? 1050

Polly. What's the use? Let me see — how
did it go? How well I remember the scene! —
the cottage was on that side, the bridge at the
back — then ballet of villagers, and the entrance
of Delphine as Jeanne, the bride — tra-lal-lala-1055
lala-la-la (*sings and pantomimes, Sam imitating her*).
Then the entrance of Claude, the bridegroom —
(*To Sam, imitating swell.*) How-de-do? how-de-
do?

Sam (*rising*). 'Ow are yer? 1060

Imitating Polly, then sitting again.

Polly. Then there was the procession to

church—the march of the soldiers over the bridge—(*sings and pantomimes*)—arrest of Claude, who is drawn for the conscription—(*business; Esther looks dreamily*), and is torn from 1065 the arms of his bride, at the church-porch. *Omnes* broken-hearted. *This is Omnes* broken-hearted. *Pantomimes.*

Esther. Polly, I don't like this; it brings back memories. 1070

Polly (*going to table and leaning her hands on it. Looks over at Esther*). Oh, fuss about memories!—one can't mourn for ever. (*Esther surprised*.) Everything in this world isn't sad. There's bad news—and there's good news sometimes—1075 when we least expect it.

Esther. Ah! not for me.

Polly. Why not?

Esther (*anxiously*). Polly!

Polly. Second Act. (*This to be said quickly, start- 1080*
ling Sam, who has been looking on the ground during last
four or five lines.) Winter—the Village Pump. This is the village pump (*pointing to Sam, seated by*
piano, on music-stool, Sam turns round on music-stool,
disgusted.) Entrance of Jeanne—now called
Jeanne la Folle, because she has gone mad on
account of the supposed loss of her husband. 1085

Sam. The supposed loss?

Polly. The supposed loss!

Esther (dropping costume). Polly!

Sam (aside to Polly). Mind!

Polly. Can't stop now! Entrance of Claude, 1090
who isn't dead, in a captain's uniform — a cloak
thrown over his shoulders.

Esther. Not dead!

Polly. Don't you remember the ballet? Jeanne
is mad, and can't recognise her husband; and 1095
don't, till he shows her the ribbon she gave him
when they were betrothed. A bit of ribbon!
Sam, have you got a bit of ribbon? Oh, that
crape sword-knot, that will do.

Crosses down. Sam astonished.

Esther. Touch that! *Rising, coming down.* 1100

Polly. Why not? — it's no use now.

Esther (slowly, looking into Polly's eyes). You
have heard of George — I know you have — I
see it in your eyes. You may tell me — I can
bear it — I can indeed — indeed I can. Tell me 1105
— he is not dead? *Violently agitated.*

Polly. No!

Esther. No?

Polly. No!

Esther (whispers). Thank Heaven! (*Sam 1110
turns on stool, back to audience.*) You've seen him,
— I see you have! — I know it! — I feel it!
I had a bright and happy dream — I saw him
as I slept! Oh, let me know if he is near!

Give me some sign — some sound — (*Polly opens* 1115
piano) — some token of his life and presence!

Sam touches Polly on the shoulder, takes hat, and exit. All to be done very quickly. Polly sits immediately at piano and plays air softly — the same air played by Esther, Act II, on the treble only.

Esther (in an ecstasy). Oh, my husband! come to me! for I know that you are near! Let me feel your arms clasp round me! Do not fear for me! — I can bear the sight of you! 1120
— (*door opens showing Sam keeping George back*) — it will not kill me! — George — love! husband — come, oh, come to me!

George breaks away from Sam, and coming down behind Esther places his hands over her eyes; she gives a faint scream, and turning, falls in his arms. Polly plays bass as well as treble of the air, forte, then fortissimo. She then plays at random, endeavouring to bide her tears. At last strikes piano wildly, and goes off into a fit of hysterical laughter, to the alarm of Sam, who, rushing down as Polly cries "Sam! Sam!" falls on his knees in front of her. They embrace, Polly pushing him contemptuously away afterwards. George gets chair, sits, and Esther kneels at his feet — he snatches off Esther's cap, and throws it up stage. Polly goes left of George, Sam brings music-stool, and she sits.

Esther. To see you here again — to feel your warm breath upon my cheek — is it real, or am I dreaming? 1125

Sam (rubbing his head). No; it's real.

Esther (embracing George). My darling!

Sam. My darling! (*Polly on music-stool, which Sam has placed for her. Sam, kneeling by her, imitates Esther — Polly scornfully pushes him away.*) But 1130
tell us — tell us how you escaped.

Geo. It's a long story, but I'll condense it. I was riding out, and suddenly found myself surrounded and taken prisoner. One of the troop that took me was a fella who had been 1135 my servant, and to whom I had done some little kindness. He helped me to escape, and hid me in a sort of cave, and for a long time used to bring me food. Unfortunately, he was ordered away; so he brought another Sepoy to 1140 look after me. I felt from the first this man meant to betray me, and I watched him like a lynx, during the one day he was with me. As evening drew on, a Sepoy picket was passing. I could tell by the look in the fella's eyes, he 1145 meant to call out as soon as they were near enough; so I seized him by the throat, and shook the life out of him.

Esther. You strangled him?

Geo. Yes.

Esther. Killed him — dead ?

Geo. He didn't get up again.

Embraces Esther.

Polly (to Sam). You never go and kill Sepoys.

Pushes him over.

Sam. No ! I pay rates and taxes. | 1155

Geo. The day after, Havelock and his Scotchmen marched through the village, and I turned out to meet them. I was too done up to join, so I was sent straight on to Calcutta. I got leave, took a berth on the P. & O. boat ; the passage 1160 restored me. I landed this morning, came on here, and brought in the milk.

Enter the Marquise ; she rushes to embrace George.

All rise, Sam putting stool back.

Marquise. My dear boy, — my dear, dear boy !

Polly. Why, see, she's crying ! She's glad to 1165 see him alive and back again.

Sam (profoundly). Well ! There's always some good in women, even when they're ladies.

Goes up to window. Polly puts dress in box, and goes to cradle ; then beside Sam.

Mar. (crossing to Esther). My dear daughter, we must forget our little differences. (*Kissing* 1170 *ber.*) Won't you ? How history repeats itself ! You will find a similar and as unexpected a re-

turn mentioned by Froissart in the chapter that treats of Philip Dartnell —

Geo. Yes, mother — I remember —

1175

Kisses her.

Mar. (to George, *aside*). We must take her abroad, and make a lady of her.

Geo. Can't, mamma; — she's ready-made. Nature has done it to our hands.

Mar. (*aside to George*). But I won't have the man who smells of putty — (*Sam, business at back. He is listening, and at the word "putty" throws his cap irritably on table. Polly pacifies him, and makes him sit down beside her on window*) — nor the man who smells of beer.

Goes to Esther, who offers her chair, and sits in chair opposite to her. Marquise back to audience, Esther facing audience.

Enter Hawtree, pale.

Haw. George! Oh, the Marchioness is here.

Geo. What's the matter?

1185

Haw. Oh, nothing. Yes, there is. I don't mind telling you. I've been thrown. I called at my chambers as I came along and found this.

Gives George a note. Sits on music-stool.

Geo. From the Countess, Lady Florence's mother. (*Reads.*) "Dear Major Hawtree, — I hasten to inform you that my daughter Florence

1190

is about to enter into an alliance with Lord Saxeby, the eldest son of the Marquis of Loamshire. Under these circumstances, should you¹¹⁹⁵ think fit to call here again, I feel assured — " Well, perhaps it's for the best. (*Returning letter.*) Caste! you know. Caste! And a marquis is a bigger swell than a major.

Haw. Yes, best to marry in your own rank¹²⁰⁰ of life.

Geo. If you can find *the* girl. But if ever you find *the* girl, marry her. As to her station, —

" True hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood." 1205

Haw. Ya-as. But a gentleman should hardly ally himself to a nobody.

Geo. My dear fella, Nobody's a mistake — he don't exist. Nobody's nobody! Everybody's somebody! 1210

Haw. Yes. But still — Caste.

Geo. Oh, Caste's all right. Caste is a good thing if it's not carried too far. It shuts the door on the pretentious and the vulgar; but it should open the door very wide for exceptional¹²¹⁵ merit. Let brains break through its barriers, and what brains can break through love may leap over.

Haw. Yes. Why, George, you're quite in-

spired — quite an orator. What makes you so 1220 brilliant? Your captivity? The voyage? What then?

Geo. I'm in love with my wife!

Enter Eccles, drunk, a bottle of gin in his hand.

Eccles (*crossing to centre of stage*). Bless this 'appy company. May we 'ave in our arms what 1225 we love in our 'earts. (*Goes to head of table. Esther goes to cradle, back to audience. Polly and Sam, half amused, half angry. Marquise still sitting in chair, back to audience. Hawtree facing Eccles. George up stage, leaning on piano in disgust.*) Polly, fetch wine-glasses — a tumbler will do for me. Let us drink a toast. Mr. Chairman (*to Marquise*), ladies and gentlemen, — I beg to propose the 1230 'ealth of our newly returned warrior, my son-in-law. (*Marquise shivers.*) The Right Honourable George De Alroy. Get glasses, Polly, and send for a bottle of sherry wine for my ladyship. My ladyship! My ladyship! M'lad'ship! 1235 (*She half turns to him.*) You and me'll have a drain together on the quiet. So delighted to see you under these altered circum — circum — circum — stangate.

Polly, who has shaken her head at him to desist, in vain, very distressed.

Sam. Shove 'is 'ead in a bucket!

1240

Exit in disgust.

Haw. (*aside to George*). I think I can abate this nuisance — at least, I can remove it.

Rises and crosses to Eccles, who has got round to side of table, leaning on it. He taps Eccles with his stick, first on right shoulder, then on left, and finally sharply on right. Eccles turns round and falls on point of stick — Hawtree steadying him. George crosses behind, to Marquise, who has gone to cradle — puts his arm round Esther and takes her to mantel-piece.

Haw. Mr. Eccles, don't you think that, with your talent for liquor, if you had an allowance of about two pounds a week, and went to ¹²⁴⁵ Jersey, where spirits are cheap, that you could drink yourself to death in a year?

Eccles. I think I could — I'm sure I'll try.

Goes up by table, steadying himself by it, and sits in chair by fire, with the bottle of gin. Hawtree standing by fire. Esther and Polly embracing. As they turn away from each other —

¹²⁴⁸ *I'll try.* In the MS. of the play the following lines occur at this point:

Esther (aside). And she will live in a back room behind a shop. Well — I hope she will be happy.

Polly (aside). And she will live in a fine house, and have a carriage, and be a lady. Well — I hope she will be happy.

When the comedy was first printed, this footnote was inserted by Robertson: —

“These last two speeches of Esther and Polly were omitted in representation. For what reason on earth — or behind the foot-lights, — the author cannot imagine.”

Geo. (*coming across with Esther*). Come and play me that air that used to ring in my ears as I lay awake, night after night, captive in the cave — you know.

He hands Esther to piano. She plays the air.

Mar. (*bending over cradle, at end*). My grandson!

Eccles falls off the chair in the last stage of drunkenness, bottle in hand. Hawtree, leaning one foot on chair from which Eccles has fallen, looks at him through eye-glass. Sam enters, and goes to Polly, behind cradle, and, producing wedding-ring from several papers, holds it up before her eyes. Esther plays until curtain drops.

Notes to Society and Caste

10, 113. "Court Circular." The official title of court news published daily in the newspapers.

10, 129. they laughing. *Works*, they a laughing.

13, 217. "honour . . . friends."

"And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have."

Macbeth, v, iii.

17, 315. **Jemmy Masseys**. Punning on Jem Mace, famous pugilist of the sixties and seventies.

18, 337-38. putt a mag. Bet a halfpence.

33, 120-22. **Every man . . . within the sound of the beau-monde**. Persons born within sound of the bells of St. Mary Le Bow in Cheapside have long been called cockneys.

38, 251. **Cock-a-doodle-doo**. This song was set by Robertson to an adaptation of an old air, "As Mars and Bellona," given in Chappel's "Old English Melodies." A burlesque version of this, narrating the Battle of Waterloo, was frequently sung at the Savage Club with the refrain of "Cock-a-doodle-doo." *Memoir*, p. xlvii, of *Principal Dramatic Works of T. W. Robertson*. For an account of the origin of the half-crown episode see the same page.

43, 16. won't dance. *Works*, don't dance.

49, 169. **all-fours**. Also known as high-low-jack, old-sledge, or seven up.

56, 346. **more champagne**. *Works*, any more champagne.

57, 358. **Bramah-locked**. A form of lock so named from its inventor, Joseph Bramah, of London (1749-1814). The present Yale lock resembles it.

67, 98-106. "As the . . . horse." Robertson slightly misquotes.

"As the husband is, the wife is: thou art mated with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag thee
down."

"He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel force,

Something better than his dog, a little nearer than his horse."

Locksley Hall.

75, 140. **vamose.** Depart, go away. Western ranch slang from Spanish *vamos*.

82, 116. **Dutch-metalled.** A kind of brass alloy, used as a cheap imitation of gold.

96, 457-58. **gold, plate, and purple.** Gold, purple, and plate in the *Works*, evidently to avoid the misleading collocation, *gold, plate*.

108. This cast of characters is printed from *Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft On and Off the Stage*, 1889 ed., p. 107.

For reference the original American cast of characters at the Broadway Theatre, New York, August 5, 1867, is given :

Hon. George D'Alroy	. . . . .	Mr. W. J. Florence.
Captain Hawtree	. . . . .	Mr. Owen Marlowe.
Eccles	. . . . .	Mr. Wm. Davidge.
Samuel Gerridge	. . . . .	Mr. Edward Lamb.
Marquise de St. Maur	. . . . .	Mrs. G. H. Gilbert.
Polly Eccles	. . . . .	Mrs. W. J. Florence.
Esther Eccles	. . . . .	Mrs. S. F. Chanfrau.

"The author, when he read his comedy, by way of describing George D'Alroy and his friend Captain Hawtree, [said] he wished one of them to be fair and the other dark." *Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft On and Off the Stage*, 1889 ed., p. 10.

108. **Esther Eccles.** The first name was originally Polly. *Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft On and Off the Stage*, 1888 edition, vol. 1, p. 321.

108. **Stangate**, in which the Little House of the Eccles group was supposed to be situated, is a sort of yard at the rear of that famous place of entertainment in the Westminster Bridge Road which for so many years was known as Astley's Amphitheatre. It was there, no doubt, that Esther Eccles danced, and the place was sadly associated in Robertson's mind with the fact that it was on those very boards that (strongly against his inclination) his first wife fulfilled the trying engagement that preceded her fatal illness. Probably Robertson knew every stone of squalid Stangate. Though

Polly speaks of the "Theatre Royal, Lambeth," such a place never existed.

112, 67-68. **absence . . . grow.**

"Absence makes the heart grow fonder ;

Isle of Beauty, fare thee well."

Isle of Beauty. Thomas Haynes Bailey (1797-1839).

114, 127-28. **True hearts . . . Norman blood.**

The original, in Tennyson's *Lady Clara Vere de Vere*, reads :

"Kind hearts." Corrected in *Works*.

115, 138. **Eccles (outside).** That is, he is inside the street door, but outside the door opening into the room. See the set as given on p. 109.

123, 332. **Can't see.** *Works*, don't see.

135, 573. **Nyer!** There!

137, 32. **now you're in the heavies.** D'Alroy is playing on heavy parts, didactic, serious parts, theatrically speaking, and heavy cavalry, to which he belongs.

140, 100. **are restless.** *Works*, very restless.

151, 374. **front, in that battell.** *Works*, front of that battell.

161, 49. **batswing.** A form of gas-burner in which gas issues at a slit so proportioned as to give to the flame the shape of a bat's wing.

178, 454. **My eyes!** *Works*, My eye!

184, 580-81. **What are circ'lars—compared to a father's feelings?** *Works*, What are circ'lars compared to a father's feelings?

190, 718. **my brother!** *Works*, my dear brother.

195, 839. **blued it.** To gamble away, dissipate.

198, 905. **I'll swear to the silk.** In the sixties the front cover of pianos was often faced with silk.

201, 984. **He's alive!** *Works* omit.

201, 987. **shutter-dance.** Strictly, a double-shuffle dance on the cellar trap-door in a public house—used for dancing because of its resonance. Here the term apparently means no more than *double-shuffle, breakdown*.

204, 1045. **Do you recollect Mdle. Delphine, Esther?** "The expedient in the last act of breaking the news to

Esther that her husband was not dead, by means of a mock ballet, grew from our impromptu entertainments at Waterloo of the previous summer." *Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft On and Off the Stage*, 1889 ed., p. 106.

207. Esther's cap. Evidently a widow's cap.

Appendix

THE POOR-RATE UNFOLDS A TALE¹

T. W. ROBINSON

"THE fact is, my poor dear old Daubray, you're spoons — case of true love — dead !"

"But what would you have me do ?" spluttered Daubray.

"Do ? get leave and cut away," was the reply.

"But I *have* got leave, and I *have* cut away — and while I was away I was miserable, and when I came back I was a gone-er coon than ever !"

"And do you mean to tell me, my dear old Dib" — Ensign Daubray was familiarly called Dib by his friends — "do you mean to tell me that your passion is incurable ?"

"Dashed if I know ; I think so !" answered Daubray.

Captain Swynton lit a cigar, and there was a pause in the conversation. Captain Swynton then asked his friend what he meant to do, and there was another pause in the conversation.

¹ This is the fourth story in the collection, *Rates and Taxes*, published in 1866 by Tom Hood, Jr., as one of his Christmas annuals. Reprinted, by kind permission, from a copy owned by Professor Brander Matthews.

"What do you mean to do, Dib?" repeated the captain.

"Dashed if I know," replied the puzzled ensign; "I don't know what to do."

"Of course, Dib, you're not such a soft as to think of marriage?" said the captain eyeing his friend keenly.

The ensign made no reply.

"That is quite out of the question," continued Swyn-ton; "you know what your mother is."

Ensign Daubray sighed and nodded as if he knew what his mother was but too well.

Captain Swyn-ton rose from his arm-chair, stirred the fire, and looking down upon his young friend like a benevolent Mephistopheles, said,

"Couldn't the thing be arranged?"

"Swyn-ton," said Ensign Daubray, rising and helping himself to a cigar, "cut that."

"Look here, Dib, if you're going to mount a moral hobby and ride—in an argumentative sense—to the Devil, I shall cut the discussion altogether. Either you are going to behave properly—with a proper regard to the world and all that[,] you know—or you are going to do the other thing. Now the question is, which do you mean to do? The girl is a very nice girl. I've seen nicer, but still she *is* a nice girl—but as to your making her Mrs. Daubray—the thing won't hold water. All those marriages of people with common people are all very well in novels, and stories on the stage—because the real people don't exist, and have no relatives who

exist, and no connections, and so no harm's done — and it's rather interesting — to look at ; but in *real* life, with real social relations, and so on — real connections — and mothers, and so forth — it's absolutely — ” Captain Swynnton described a circle with his cigar. “ I don't pretend to be a particularly good fellow, or a particularly bad fellow ; I suppose I'm a sort of average — regular standard kind of man — I'm not particularly worldly. I gave up the girl I was attached to — we'd neither of us any money — and I preferred that we should have enough and be apart, rather than be hard up together. You've heaps of money, but you can't marry a woman you can't present everywhere. Out of the question, Dib, and you know it. The world's the world, and you and I didn't make it — very good thing for the world we didn't.”

Ensign Daubray took his hat, and after a long and searching contemplation of the lining, put it on his head.

“ Going ? ” asked his friend.

“ Yass.”

“ Where shall you dine ? ”

“ Club.”

“ And after ? ”

“ Theatre.”

The captain hissed significantly as he sank into his chair.

“ By the way,” he said, “ you'll lose your bet with Sydney.”

“ Why ? ”

"I met Thraxton yesterday, and he told me that war was certain."

"Bosh!"

"How so?"

"Too far off."

"What is?"

"Ruthshia. They'll do something at the Foreign Office; both sides will cry a go, and they'll throw up the sthponge mutually; so I heard at the Club. Shan't pay till war's declared."

Saying which Ensign Daubray descended the staircase of Captain Swynton's lodgings in Mayfair, and walking to the nearest cab rank, took a Hansom.

"Westhminsther Bridge, t'other side, as fatht as you like," he ordered, and the cab rattled over the stones rapidly.

Ensign Daubray was twenty-three years of age; stood six feet two in his stockings, and in his saddle weighed over seventeen stone. He was of one of the first families in England. His father was dead, and his mother, who had been a great beauty, and was in her age hook-nosed, majestic, and terrible, had married a second time, and she ruled Lord Clardonax as tightly as she had ruled Fairfax Daubray. She was a haughty, irascible old woman, who knew no law but her own will, and whose pride of birth and family was French and pre-revolutionary French. Ensign Fairfax Daubray was a fine young fellow, high-hearted and broad-chested, single-minded and straightforward, and not particularly bright. He had

a vacant expression of face, which fact, joined to the possession of a tongue either too broad or too thick for his mouth, made him seem stupid. He was fond of field sports, had been reared to regard his lady-mother with a superstitious sort of awe, and was a very quiet, well-disciplined young man.

Captain Swynton was Daubray's senior by about six years. There was a suspicion of trade in the family of the gallant captain, which he endeavoured to stifle by professing a contempt for commerce that would have been exaggerated in a duke. He was a sort of mild *roué* and amiable worldling, with a considerable capacity for misconduct, and a fair share of good nature and kind-heartedness. He was never known to do anything exactly noble, nor had he been discovered in the execution of anything particularly mean. He expressed openly and with perfect sincerity, his regard for number one, and thought that all men should seize every opportunity for self-advancement. He was a good-tempered man about town, who would leave the society of a baronet for that of a lord, unless the baronet happened to be very rich and influential, would drop a viscount for a marquis, and the marquis for a duke. In whatever society he found himself, he invariably addressed his conversation to the most important person present, and was considered among his set a very nice, gentlemanlike fellow.

At Westminster Bridge Fairfax Daubray dismissed his cab, turned to the left, and walked till he came to Stangate. He paused before a house with a shrivelled shrub and

some mangy grass between the lead-coloured wooden railings of the "front garden" and the door, and then opening the gate gently, he tripped up some steps, and knocked a small double knock, quite a diminutive knock for so large a young man. Having committed himself thus far, Ensign Daubray fell to a persevering contemplation of his boots, and the colour ebbed and flowed about his temples, and the short fair hair in their immediate neighbourhood, with the regularity of the pendulum of a clock.

It was a dreary morning, and Stangate is a dreary neighbourhood, and has an air of general neglect and decay, as though the hand of Chancery were strong upon it. There is but little stir in Stangate. It is not a crowded mart or thoroughfare. Purveyors of cheap fish and damp cocks and hens are its most ordinary frequenters. The very children seem¹ depressed, and turn to the river side for excitement and fresh Thames air. Ensign Daubray's mother, Lady Clardonax, would have stared, had she seen her son in such a place, with all the might of her dark eyes and purple *pince-nez*.

The door was opened by a young girl with black, shining hair and a pale face.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" she said; "I thought it was you."

And she laughed. Fairfax Daubray seemed to think it a good joke, too, for he also laughed.

"May I come in?" he inquired.

¹ Original reads: seemed.

“Of course you may ; we are all at home.”

The young man was ushered into a room where there were three more young ladies, all with dark shiny hair and large eyes ; one was mending a pink silk-stockings, another was covering a tiny canvas shoe, and the third was recumbent on a dusky sofa, deep in a well-worn and unpleasant looking romance. The fair young hostess snatched a basin containing vegetables from the table, and disappeared with them, saying, as she returned —

“You mustn’t see what we have got for dinner, or you’ll be as wise as we are.”

“How do you all do ?” asked Daubray, as he dropped into a chair.

“We are all quite well, and so is Polly,” said the first speaker.

Polly was the young lady mending the pink silk-stockings, and her three sisters — for they were all sisters — looked at her as they spoke, and then looked at Ensign Daubray and smiled archly, and went on with their occupations.

Daubray sat near Polly, but did not address her personally. Polly was the eldest, the darkest eyed, and the prettiest of the sisters ; demure, quiet, and self-possessed.

“What are you going to have for dinner, Jenny ?” the young man asked.

“Find out,” was Miss Jenny’s reply. Jenny was the plainest of the sisters, and had acquired a sort of family celebrity for housekeeping and repartee.

"I wish you'd ask me to dine with you," said the young soldier.

"Oh, no!" Jenny pursed her lips, and shook her head. "You're too grand for us; you'd be wanting two sorts of puddings, and all sorts of things."

"No, I shouldn't," urged Daubray.

"Then you'd eat too much," said Jenny, at which the sisters laughed.

"No, I shouldn't. I'm moderation itself. I can eat anything," said Daubray, somewhat contradictorily.

Jenny shook her head again. "It's all very fine, Mr. Ferguson," she said, "but you don't dine here. What's the time?"

The sister covering the shoe, the sister reading the romance upon the sofa, Polly and Jenny, each produced from the bosoms of their jackets a gold watch.

"Half-past one," they all said in concert.

Daubray looked at Polly, drew a long breath, and asked, "What time?"

"Half-past one," answered Polly; and she smiled on him, and then lowered her large eyelids; and Daubray hitched his chair nearer to her; and the other sisters looked everywhere but at them, and pursued their avocations with an absorbing interest.

"Now, Sabina," began Jenny sharply, "are you going to lie about reading that filthy book all day? And you, Cecilia, are you ever going to finish that shoe of mine? Do do something, there's dears."

At this signal the sisters Sabina and Cecilia rose and

left the room, and Jenny laughed and said to Daubray and Polly, "Now, you two, you can go on just as you like, for we shall be in the kitchen till dinner-time, and that's half-past two; then Polly must go out for a pink saucer." Jenny then hummed an operatic air, threw her arms gracefully from side to side, executed a *pas* from the Grand Divertissement des Bayadères, and left the room laughing loudly.

Ensign Fairfax Daubray was desperately in love with Miss Polly Eccles, a fact which was known to everybody at the —— Theatre. Love had seized upon the young soldier as fiercely as fire seizes on a river-side wood-yard. The flame was so restless and so brilliant, that it was reflected around him, and about him, and above him and below him. He sighed like a furnace. He was in the habit of relieving his feelings by tipping the porter and the carpenters of the —— Theatre so liberally that they swore he was the gentlemanest gentleman they ever see, and that he came of a fine old stock, and understood how thirsty were the natural emotions of the working man. Daubray was a large man, and love raged over him like a benignant fever. He did not say much — indeed, his conversational powers were not extraordinary, but he looked smitten to the core. The thirsty carpenters called him "Miss Eccles's young gent," and Miss Eccles's comrades in the *corps de ballet* nicknamed him "Captain Spooney." The actors and actresses regarded him with a sort of sympathetic pity — for all of which Daubray cared not one strap-buckle. When at the theatre, he

saw neither the carpenters, nor the actors, nor the actresses, nor the gas, nor the scenery, nor the play, nor the farce, nor the green curtain — he only saw Polly. At the conclusion of the performance he was permitted to see Polly from the stage-door to her home, and to carry her small basket ; her three sisters discreetly walked before. The young man passed the day contentedly, knowing that that half-hour of bliss must in time come round again.

During the run of the celebrated and magnificent melodramatic Eastern spectacle of “The Star of the Orient,” the part of Zuleika, the favourite of the Caliph, was personated by Mademoiselle Sara, from the Grand Opera, at Paris. *The* Sara who, it was said, had turned the heads of so many English and foreign noblemen, and other persons of distinction. The Sara did not act, she danced nightly before an indifferent Caliph and an enraptured audience. Humm, the manager, the successor to the late Mr. Loosefish and the celebrated Mr. Lowcadd, swore — that is swore literally — she was a great go, a cigar of the most enormous magnitude, and presented her, in the green-room[,] with a bracelet, as he said, “as a trifling tribute of his deep sense and estimation of her professional talents, and private virtues.” To which fine speech Mademoiselle Sara replied that he was a droll, and then kissed him on both cheeks.

It was reported that Daubray had spent several hundred thousands of pounds upon “the Sara,” and that he had the tenderest interest in her ; the poor lad had never

really cared for her, but had been led into her toils by his friends Captain Swynton, old Lord Gasseleer, and Colonel Corcarmine. The Sara told him frankly that she liked him because he was young, because he was *bête*, because he was rich, and because he was English. "I like to conquer you, you English," she said to him; "and you must attend always by the side to aid my mantle."

It was when in attendance on this gorgeous creature, during the run of the "Star of the Orient," that Ensign Daubray first saw Polly Eccles. Mr. Lowcadd, the manager of the opposition establishment, had produced a rival spectacle and a rival dancer, and had, as Mr. Humm feelingly expressed it, "in the basest, most blackguard, *and* ungentlemanly manner, offered his ballet higher terms to go over to him." A number of the corps deserted Mr. Humm. Mr. Humm had to make fresh engagements, and among these engagements he was fortunate enough to secure the services of the Eccles family.

The history of the Eccles family was by no means singular or romantic. Of the pre-nuptial antecedents of Mr. and Mrs. Eccles, nothing is known. Mr. Eccles had been a mechanic of some sort or other. Mr. Eccles was either overproud, or possessed of mental attributes too high for his station in life — for he would not work. As all men of active minds must find some occupation to interest and amuse them, Mr. Eccles took to drinking — a pursuit which he varied at tolerably regular intervals by beating his wife. The poor woman eked out a scanty livelihood by letting off a portion of the house in Stangate, and by

her needle. She gladdened Mr. Eccles's home by four pledges of mutual affection — all of the female sex. While the fourth was still a nursling, Mrs. Eccles did the very best possible thing she could do under the circumstances — she died — leaving Mr. Eccles a disconsolate widower with four children.

The measure of Mr. Eccles's grief may be best judged by the copious means he took for banishing recollection. He wept tears whenever he alluded to his late wife, in the presence of a person of sympathetic mind and hospitable intentions. "Polly," sobbed and hiccupped Mr. Eccles, "my eldest gal, is now my only consolation — she takes after her poor mother, which is a comfort to me."

And Polly, who was barely nine years of age, took after her mother, and nursed her baby sister, and washed and combed her other little sisters, and waited on her father, and was abused and beaten by him. It was a horrid thing, as Mr. Eccles often remarked, to have ungrateful children.

The younger Eccleses flourished under Polly's maternal care; and a young Frenchman, a watchmaker, took a room in the house. The young Frenchman was visited by an older Frenchman — a thin, pale little man, who was a ballet-master at one of the large theatres on the other side of the water. The old Frenchman took a fancy to little Polly, and seeing that she was pretty, well limbed, and graceful, asked her if she would join his class.

"When you shall be older," he said, "a young woman, you shall be able to get your living by dancing — or as I get mine — by teaching to dance."

Polly told him that her father could not afford to pay for her tuition, and the pale little Frenchman said that he did not require payment, but that he would teach her for nothing, because she was like a little lady he had known long years ago, and a long way off. And so Polly took lessons of the kind old ballet-master, and in her turn taught the lessons she learned of him to her two younger sisters ; and every evening when Mr. Eccles was at the public-house, the three sisters used to dance, which not only interested and amused them, but interested and amused the baby in the cradle, who sat up and watched them.

Thus the Eccles family became part and parcel of the London *corps de ballet*. About the same time that Polly had acquired some proficiency in her art, her old patron the ballet-master left England for Vienna, and poor Polly remained a private fairy in the rank and file of the terpsichorean regiment.

No satisfactory reason has yet been discovered why two young people should fall in love. No special commission, or scientific inquiry, or metaphysical discussion has ever yet given to light those mysterious affinities that compel one young gentleman or lady, or a young lady or a young gentleman, to ignore the rest of the world in favour of one person — to overlook eight hundred millions of inhabitants of this terrestrial globe for the sake of a single unit, because that single unit possesses a peculiar smile, or tone of voice, or an expression which, somehow or other, warms and gladdens, and melts the worldly surface,

and liquefies the feelings of another unit. These unaccountable sympathies are more extraordinary than electricity, galvanism, earthquakes, ærolites, and spontaneous combustions, with which last mentioned phenomenon they have something in common. Ensign Fairfax Daubray must be excused for exhibiting a weakness which has been considered honourable in philosophers and statesmen, to say nothing of poets and warriors, who are supposed to be peculiarly susceptible to the influences of the tender passion. Love has been said to be a furious democrat, who flies about and levels all distinctions. He, she, or it, whichever love may be, would be better described as a mischievous aristocrat, who, kicked out of his, or her, or its own sphere for misconduct, pervades the world, a beautiful incendiary — smouldering the hearts of rich and poor, and high and low, and finding pleasure in watching the agony, the joy, the flames, and smoke — and light and charred ashes, and hope and desolation, he, she, or it occasions. The only scion of the house of Daubray was wrong to fall in love with a young woman who earned eighteen shillings per week, and whose father was known as Sodden Sammy, for a mile round Astley's amphitheatre — but he was hot-blooded and young — and it *was to be*. The Fates had declared that they should meet, — and had employed Mademoiselle Sara of the Grand Opera at Paris to negotiate with the liberal and enterprising impresario, Mr. Humm; Mr. Lowcadd, the other enterprising and liberal impresario, to quarrel with Mr. Humm and to produce a rival spectacle, and entice

away Humm's ballet-dancers ; Captain Swynton, Lord Gasseleer, and Colonel Corcarmine, to present the Ensign to the Sara. The remorseless ones, perhaps, even doomed Mrs. Eccles to an early death, and afflicted Mr. Eccles with a desire for drink, for the purpose of bringing them together.

Ensign Daubray was in attendance on the gorgeous Sara on the night that his fate cried out—and pronounced the dissyllable "Polly." Miss Mary Eccles was standing at the second wing on the opposite-prompt side of the stage of the —— Theatre, attired in simple white, and carrying in her hand a long pink scarf, which in company with fifteen other young ladies, each carrying a long pink scarf, she was about to wreath around the celebrated *danseuse* from the Grand Opera at Paris. Their eyes met. Daubray experienced a pleasant momentary spasm, such as Paganini might have felt, if, after the very moment he discovered his power over the fourth string of his violin, that string had snapped. Miss Mary Eccles's gaze passed on to other objects—and the work was done.

"How are you, Sampray?" said the Ensign to an actor who, dressed in stage clothes for the farce, was watching the dancers from the wing. "Who is that girl—there?"

"The one on the bank nearest us?"

"Yes."

"One of the Eccleses ; the eldest — Poll."

Daubray's nerves were jarred by the monosyllable "Poll." He placidly asked, "Who is she?"

"Oh, in the ballet. She's got three sisters too."

"In the ballet too?"

"All in the ballet!"

"And here — I mean engaged here?"

"Every man Jack of 'em. Polly always takes them with her," was the reply. "There they are t'other side — up the stage. Clever girl, Polly — nice dancer; but the others keep her down. By Jove!" continued the comedian as he listened to a thunderous burst of applause, "Sara's hitting 'em to-night!"

Daubray first looked at Sara, and then at Polly; Sara in rainbow hues and diamonds, and Polly in white, with her hair in bands and her long eye-lashes, contrasted as might a black-edged daisy with a tiger-lily.

The Ensign went to a splendid supper that night, with Gasseleer, Corcarmine, Swynton and friends, and Sara and friends; but the young man was *distract*, and did not seem to enjoy himself. His apparent apathy to the glories of the gay and festive scene was remarked on brilliantly by old Lord Gasseleer, who was extremely anxious to be an amiable and gallant cavalier in the eyes of the Sara; and Sara herself laughed, and said, with an odd look, that she supposed he — Daubray — was in loaf.

"Old Gazzy wants to cut me out!" said the Ensign to Corcarmine on the following morning; "I wish he would!" a fact which Corcarmine mentioned to the noble lord, and Daubray's wish was gratified.

The Sara having disappeared from the panorama of events, his next difficulty was to obtain an introduction

to Polly. Not that one was needed. He knew perfectly well that Miss Eccles knew him to be Ensign Daubray, and believed him to be attached. He wished to be presented as a fresh, free man, and, to quote from his own mental soliloquy, "To begin all over again quite new, you know." Luckily, though the "Star of the Orient" was withdrawn from the playbills, the Eccles family were retained on the establishment. Ensign Daubray sat in his rooms and abandoned himself to thought. How could he make friends with the Eccleses? He knew them to be retiring, bashful girls, and he wanted to know them on domestic familiar terms, and not merely to be able to nod to them. The gallant officer was slow at invention. On such a subject he could not ask his friends to put him up to a notion. He sat and pondered, but no notion came. He lit a cigar, but inspiration was not to be wooed by the most fragrant of havannahs. He dressed himself, and went out for a walk in the park, where his mind would be undisturbed by horseflesh; and on his return stopped at a pastry-cook's, where he saw a stout woman and four fat children eating.

The sight of the stout woman and the four fat children eating suggested an expedient. Daubray entered the shop, and purchased some of the most expensive sweetmeats. These at night he gave to Cecilia, the smallest, youngest, Eccles; from chatting with Cecilia, he was in time noticed by Sabina; after Sabina, Jenny very kindly nodded to him; and, at last, Polly spoke.

Behold, then, our Ensign thoroughly installed as the

friend of the Eccles family, with honourable intentions towards the eldest sister. It was Daubray's particular request that the young ladies should call him "Dib," which they did ; that is, all but Polly, who would never call her Fairfax Dib, but who afterwards invented the diminutive "Fax." The prattle of the girls over their tea — they seldom or never took dinner — was delightful to the young swell. He often enjoyed that refreshing beverage with them, and brought tarts for the consolation of the younger sisters. When he went over to Paris, he bought each of them a gold watch and chain, and the day of the presentation of those gold watches and chains was the happiest of the lives both of the Eccles sisters and the gallant Ensign. They were wonderful watches, they wound up so beautifully, they ticked so regularly, and they opened and shut with such delicious bran-new, first-hand snaps. As for the chains, they were indeed heavenly. Such workmanship, such weight! Solid gold, too! — so bright, so yellow! The joy of their possession was only damped by the reflection that if their father saw them, he would assuredly make away with them. The watches, chains, and all were therefore kept a secret — in the most literal sense of the word — in the bosoms of the four sisters.

Ensign Daubray was naturally very much shocked at the first sight of Mr. Eccles, and it required all his love to make him remember that so damaged a parent was his Polly's misfortune and not her fault. Mr. Eccles was a dirty-looking old villain, with the flavour of last night's

tap-room strong upon him. His address was unpleasing, fawning, and sham-propitiatory. Daubray saw the black-guard under his too civil, over-deferential manner, and wondered why for the sake of his own comfort he — Eccles — did not wash himself oftener. The girls considered their father a good average sort of parent ; a little tipsified, but that they were used to ; and certainly somewhat eccentric, which was proved by his frequent personal castigation of his daughters — Polly, as the oldest and most habituated, being his favourite for punishment ; but a very clever man for all that, and who could have done wonders — had he liked.

The courting, walking home, and tea-making went on for more than a year, at which time the narrative commences ; when Polly was promoted to the position of Columbine at the —— Theatre, of which she informed “ Fax,” who turned pale, and said he’d be hanged if she should be Columbine, and that he had made up his mind.

Not two months after, Captain Swynton, who had long missed his friend from his accustomed haunts, met him on Westminster Bridge with a lady on his arm. The captain smiled and nodded, and would have passed on, had not Daubray stopped him.

“ Swynton, how do you do ? ” said he, and then, lowering his voice, whispered, “ I’m married ! ”

The captain’s face assumed an odd, lowering expression, as if he would have said, “ You *fool*.” But it changed immediately as he uttered, “ I congratulate you ! ”

"My dear, Captain Swynton, Mrs. Fairfax Daubray. Come back and dine with us, will you? Five."

"Thanks, no, not to-day; I've an engagement — some other day I shall be —"

"Say Thursday. Will Thursday do, Polly? Yes, Thursday — by ourselves — you know."

"We shall be most happy to see Captain Swandown."

"Swynton, love."

"Swynton — I beg pardon," said Polly, thinking how much handsomer her "Fax" was than his friend.

Swynton accepted the invitation and strode off to Birdcage Walk, tapping his trousers vigorously with his cane. "Cheese and crust!" he said to himself; "what will the old lady say?"

They were very happy, the young pair, in their little cottage at Twickenham, and it was by the river side one darkling evening that the young wife whispered to her young husband that an heir or heiress to the house of Daubray might be soon expected.

"Let's walk quickly home, pet," said the anxious Fairfax, "for it is beginning to rain, and you might get wet."

Ensign Daubray's regiment was ordered to the Crimea. Lady Clardonax kissed her son's forehead, and pressed his hand as she told him that she was sure that he would do his duty.

"Dib," said Captain Swynton, as he met the Ensign

in Piccadilly, "you see you've lost your bet. Been to Lady Clardonax's?"

"Yes."

"Did you tell her?"

"About Polly — no!"

"What do you mean to do?"

"Not tell her at all," replied Daubray. "When I come back — *if* I come back — she'll be so glad she'll forgive me, and if I *don't* come back, why, it won't much matter."

"That's a very good notion," remarked Swynton.

"It wasn't mine. It was my wife's."

"How does she bear it?"

"What — the — my going? Oh, splendidly, *before me*. I'm afraid when I'm out there — she rather, you know — I've been to the agent's, and I think I'd rather leave a sum, and I haven't got much, to be sure. She's going back to live with her sisters."

"What!" said Swynton, "do you mean to allow that?"

"She'll be so awful lonely when I'm gone; and you know there's a baby coming," said the poor fellow, apologetically. "It's a bad job, isn't it? and there's that little wife of Sergeant Dwyer's breaking her heart because he won't take her out with him. I don't think soldiers ought to marry. Orders do so cut up the women."

It was a terrible parting. Polly bore it as meekly as she could, but there are bounds to the endurance even

of women ; and Fairfax had to go upon his knees and implore her to keep calm for the sake of the little one not yet of this world. The bugles rang out and the drums rolled as Ensign Daubray took his place with his company ; and as he marched past the Queen, his heart thumped, and he felt every inch a soldier. At the same moment his wife was lying insensible, with her three pale sisters hovering round her.

Fairfax Daubray was a brave, stupid, good-natured young man, and adored by the men under his command. A finer-hearted gentleman, or a more incapable officer never buckled on a sword-belt. He fought gallantly at Alma, and wrote after the battle. His wife, who was again in the little house in Stangate, read parts of his letter to her sisters, who cheered, and wept, and hurrahed as she read. She took them all with her to church upon the following Sunday.

It was in a hot skirmish that Ensign Daubray found himself in command of his company. His captain had been shot, and the lieutenant borne wounded to the rear. He saw the enemy above him. He knew that it was a soldier's duty to fight, and he led on his men up the hill-side.

"Dib, Dib, come back!" shouted two or three old officers from the main body of the troops behind him. Daubray turned round to them.

"*Come back be damned!*" answered he, waving his sword above his head ; "*you fellows come on!*"

The next moment he fell pierced by three Russian

bullets. The soldiers saw him fall, cheered, and rushed on. The Russians were in strong force, the odds, numerically, were six to one, but the English regiment cleared the hill-side.

Daubray was carried to the rear. The surgeon shook his head. The dying man raised his eyelids, looked at his friend Swynton with a look that said plainly, "Oh, if I could speak." His comrade pressed his hand, and, bending over him, put his lips close to his ear.

"Dib," he said, "can you hear me? do you understand me?"

Daubray nodded an assent.

"I know what you mean," continued Swynton. "I know what you would say — your wife."

Daubray smiled.

"Rely on me, I'll look after her, take care of her, and — and — your child!"

The wounded man smiled again, pressed his friend's hand, sank back, and died, as the general of division galloped up, and said to a bleeding major —

"Beautiful! beautiful! Like men, by God!"

A son and heir was born to the house of Daubray. The mother had hardly recovered when the fatal letter reached England; but Jenny, when she saw that the address was not in the usual handwriting, guessed instantly at its contents. She opened and read it, and kept it from her sister for some days. When she heard the news, the widowed mother was prostrated for some weeks — afflictions seldom come alone. The last money

received from the agent's had been intrusted to Mr. Eccles. Whether he had gambled or spent it was never known, but a balance of but a few poor pounds was found at the banker's, and over that Mr. Eccles had full power: he had banked it in his own name. A stormy scene ensued between father and daughter. Mrs. Daubray asked him if he wished to see his grandson starve? To which Mr. Eccles replied that after all he had done for her, the position he had raised her to, she was ungrateful, and hoped that she never might live to feel how sharper than a serpent's tooth was a thankless child. Mrs. Daubray thought of returning to the stage, but her sister Jenny would not hear of it. Mr. Eccles advised his daughter to apply to Major Daubray's friends, who would be sure to stand something handsome under the circumstances; upon which, Mrs. Daubray desired him to hold his tongue.

Major Swynton returned to England with one of his coat sleeves empty. Almost his first call was on his comrade's widow. She told him of her pecuniary troubles, and he lent her money. He paid a visit to Lady Clardonax, and told her how her son died. The stern old lady's eyes moistened at the story, and she sprang from her chair and startled the major when he mentioned that he had left a wife and child.

"What?" she cried, "who was she? Some common person, of course?"

Major Swynton related the whole history.

"Major," said Lady Clardonax, "are you sure that they were married?"

The major laid the marriage certificate upon the table.

"And is *my grandson*," the old lady's voice faltered at the words, "with these wretched people?"

The major assented.

"He must not remain there. I'll get a nurse and have him here at once. What's the address? I'll go there at once."

"Shall I accompany you?"

"No, I'll go by myself," replied Lady Clardonax, to the major's great relief; for brave among men, he was afraid of women in their wrath.

A carriage stood before the door of the little house in Stangate. Lady Clardonax introduced herself, and desired that her son's son might go back with her. Mrs. Daubray fired up and refused. The old grandmother was haughty and imperious; the young mother, passionate and proud; a violent altercation ensued, and Mrs. Daubray, in a flood of tears, desired Lady Clardonax to leave the house.

"Part with *him, my boy!*" she panted, "I'd sooner die!"

"You can see him when you wish to do so," said the lady.

"Better do what the good lady asks you, my dear," suggested the amiable Mr. Eccles, who was present, and desired to make himself agreeable to the owner of a carriage and pair; "for sure she's advising you for your good, and for the child's likewise."

"My good creature," urged Lady Clardonax, "you

surely cannot intend to bring up my son's son in a place like this?"

"It *is* a poor place," sighed Mr. Eccles, "and we are poor people, that's sure enough. We ought not to fly in the face of our pastors and masters, our pastresses and mistresses."

"*Do* hold your tongue!" said Jenny, who felt a strong inclination to assault both Lady Clardonax and her father at the same time.

"Master Fairfax Daubray," said Mrs. Daubray, hugging the infant, who was serenely unconscious of the storm about him, "Master Fairfax Daubray will remain with his mother!"

"But you've no money. Fairfax's father and Fairfax himself so dipped the estate that it will be ten years before it is got round. How do you intend to live?" asked the old lady.

"Turn Columbine," replied the [mother¹]; "go on the stage again and dance!"

This last speech was too much for Lady Clardonax, who beat a precipitate retreat; at the bottom of the stairs Mr. Eccles overtook her, and requested the loan of the sum of a sovereign until that day week.

"Go away," said the old lady, as she stepped into her carriage and drove off.

But a Higher Power than that of a mother over her

¹ Original misprints: themer.

child had decreed that the infant was to be reared by Lady Clardonax. Mrs. Daubray fell ill, and her illness was past cure. Lady Clardonax, accompanied by Major Swynton, were received at the little house in Stangate by Jenny, who tearfully told them it would soon be all over, that her sister had been delirious, and had kept on saying that she was going away to see Fairfax to tell him about the child, and when they went into the sick-room the young mother hugged her baby and said —

“Take him, Lady Clardonax, and forgive me for what I said to you. I need not ask you to be kind to him, for I know you will for his sake! My darling! oh, my darling!”

“And so,” concluded the Tax Collector, “Major Swynton was the boy’s guardian, and old Lady Clardonax brought him up, and a real young swell he is, and looks as proud as you please; and as for the old lady, who, between ourselves, is an awful old devil generally, she doats upon that boy to that extent that she’s a regular slave to him. When Lord Clardonax wants a thing done, he tells the boy, who tells his grandma, who has it done ‘too sweet,’ as the French say, for she thinks nothing too sweet for him.”

“And what became of the other girls?” asked the Water-rate.

“They married — and so on.”

“And the major?”

“Oh, he married his first love — as he found was a

widow. He's been an altered man ever since he came back from the Crimea, very grave and serious, and all that; don't seem to care about being so uppish."

"And what became of old Eccles?"

"Don't know," was the reply. "He went somewhere — to the bad, of course, in a general sort of way."

Bibliography

*In this Bibliography, the editor has confined himself to Robertson's dramatic work. To make a complete record of the extraordinary number of short stories, and articles on all kinds of subjects, that he contributed to magazines and other publications would be not only impossible but outside the purpose of this book. Even this list of plays, as far as adaptations are concerned, may, in spite of the editor's researches, be somewhat incomplete. Robertson in his struggling days worked "for stock," that is, he would procure as many French plays as possible, prepare English versions of them, and then sell them, at what price he could, and as opportunity offered, to Thomas Hailes Lacy or any other purchaser of such wares. An example of the way in which Robertson's "stock" adaptations were treated may be found in his version of *The Ladies' Battle*. In Lacy's list it appeared, with the cast given of Charles Reade's translation of the same play, as represented at the Olympic Theatre on May 7th, 1851. There is no evidence of Robertson's work getting a good hearing until it was staged by John Hare and the Kendals at the Court Theatre in 1879, and, a season or so later, at the St. James's Theatre.*

I. ROBERTSON'S PLAYS

Wherever it has been possible the editor has given the dates of first performances. Unless any other town is mentioned, London may be understood as the place of first performance or of publication.

Ad. signifies an adaptation. Un. an unacted piece.

The other plays are original.

A BREACH OF PROMISE, farce, 2 Acts. Globe Theatre, April 10th, 1867.

A DREAM OF VENICE, 2 Acts. German Reed Entertainment.

A GLASS OF WATER, comedy, 2 Acts. *Ad.*

A NIGHT'S ADVENTURE, comic drama, 2 Acts. Olympic Theatre, Aug. 25th, 1851.

A RAPID THAW, comedy, 2 Acts. St. James's Theatre, March 2nd, 1867.

A ROW IN THE HOUSE, farce, 1 Act. Toole's Theatre, Aug. 30th, 1883.¹

BIRDS OF PREY, or A DUEL IN THE DARK, drama, 3 Acts. *Ad.*
BIRTH, comedy, 3 Acts. Theatre Royal, Bristol, Oct. 5th, 1870.

CASTE, comedy, 3 Acts. Prince of Wales's Theatre, April 6th, 1867.

CASTLES IN THE AIR, drama. City Theatre, April 29th, 1854.²

DAVID GARRICK, comedy, 3 Acts. Prince of Wales's Theatre, Birmingham, April, 1864. *Ad.*

DOWN IN OUR VILLAGE, comedy drama, 2 Acts. *Un.*

DREAMS, drama, 5 Acts. Alexandra Theatre, Liverpool, Feb. 22nd, 1869.³

DUBLIN BAY, farce, 1 Act. Theatre Royal, Manchester, May 18th, 1869.

ERNESTINE, drama, 4 Acts. *Ad.*

FOR LOVE ; or TWO HEROES, drama, 3 Acts. Holborn Theatre, Oct. 5th, 1867.

FAUST AND MARGUERITE, drama, 3 Acts. *Ad.*

HOME, comedy, 3 Acts. *Ad.* Haymarket Theatre, Jan. 14th, 1869.

JOCRISSE THE JUGGLER, drama, 3 Acts. *Ad.*

M. P., comedy, 4 Acts. Prince of Wales's Theatre, April 23d, 1870.

MY WIFE'S DIARY, farce, 1 Act. *Ad.*

NOEMIE, drama, 2 Acts. *Ad.*

NOT AT ALL JEALOUS, farce, 1 Act.

OURS, comedy, 3 Acts. Prince of Wales's Theatre, Liverpool, Aug. 23d, 1866.

OVER THE WAY, comedietta, 1 Act. *Un.*

PASSION FLOWERS, drama, 3 Acts. *Ad.* Theatre Royal, Hull, Oct. 28th, 1868.

1 This was produced by his son, T. W. Robertson the younger, and in it his daughter, Miss Maud Robertson, took part.

2 Robertson sold the entire rights in this drama for £31

3 This was at first called *My Lady Clara*, but on its production at the Gaiety Theatre on March 27th, 1869, it was renamed *Dreams*.

- PEACE AT ANY PRICE, farce, 1 Act. *Ad.*
 PHOTOGRAPHS AND ICES, farce, 1 Act. *Un.*
 PLAY, comedy, 4 Acts. Prince of Wales's Theatre, Feb. 15th, 1868.
 POST HASTE, comedy, 3 Acts. *Un.*
 PROGRESS, comedy, 3 Acts. *Ad.* Globe Theatre, Sept. 18th, 1869.
 ROBINSON CRUSOE, burlesque, 1 Act.
 RUY BLAS, drama, 4 Acts. *Ad.*
 SCHOOL, comedy, 4 Acts. Prince of Wales's Theatre, Jan. 16th, 1869.¹
 SHADOW TREE SHAFT, drama, 3 Acts. Princess's Theatre, Feb. 6th, 1867.
 SOCIETY, comedy, 3 Acts. Prince of Wales's Theatre, Liverpool, May 8th, 1865.
 THE BATTLE OF LIFE. *Ad.*
 THE CANTAB, farce, 1 Act.
 THE CHEVALIER DE ST. GEORGE, drama, 3 Acts. *Ad.*
 THE CLOCKMAKER'S HAT, farce, 1 Act. *Ad.*
 THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH. *Ad.*
 THE DUKE'S DAUGHTER; or THE HUNCHBACK OF PARIS, drama, 3 Acts and Prologue. *Ad.*²
 THE HALF CASTE; or THE POISONED PEARL, drama, 3 Acts. *Ad.*
 THE HAUNTED MAN. *Ad.*
 THE LADIES' BATTLE, comedy, 3 Acts. *Ad.*
 THE MULETEER OF TOLEDO, drama, 4 Acts. *Ad.*
 THE NIGHTINGALE, drama, 5 Acts. Adelphi Theatre, Jan. 15th, 1870.
 THE SEA OF ICE; or THE PRAYER OF THE WRECKED, AND THE GOLD SEEKERS OF MEXICO, drama, 5 Acts. *Ad.*
 THE STAR OF THE NORTH, drama, 3 Acts. *Ad.*
 TWO GAY DECEIVERS; or BLACK, WHITE, AND GREY, farce, 1 Act. In collaboration with T. H. Lacy.
 WAR, drama, 3 Acts. St. James's Theatre, Jan. 16th, 1871.
 WHICH IS IT? comedy, 2 Acts. *Un.*

¹ Partly suggested by the German *Aschenbrödel* of Roderich Benedix.

² This was another version of the play made popular by Fechter as *The Duke's Motto*.

II. TEXTS

SOCIETY

186-. DE WITT'S ACTING PLAYS. No. 26. [Robertson's son says in the Memoir (*Dramatic Works*, p. lix) that this is the pirated edition made by W. J. Florence and differs from the English acting version.] N. Y.

[?] FRENCH'S STANDARD DRAMA. London and N. Y.

1893. PRINCIPAL DRAMATIC WORKS, 2 vols. Memoir by his Son [Thomas William Robertson]. *Society*, vol. II.

CASTE

186-. DE WITT'S ACTING PLAYS. No. I.

1876. THE NEW YORK DRAMA. Vol. v, No. 54.

187-. FRENCH'S STANDARD DRAMA. London and N. Y.

1889. ROORBACH'S EDITION OF ACTING PLAYS, No. 37. N. Y.

1891. IHRE FAMILIE. Julius Stinde and George Engels. Produced at the Wallner Theatre, Berlin, in September.

1893. PRINCIPAL DRAMATIC WORKS. Vol. I.

III. BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL

1866. RATES AND TAXES AND HOW THEY WERE COLLECTED. Edited by Tom Hood. Groombridge & Sons. *The Poor-Rate Unfolds a Tale*, pp. 157-84.

1870. MODERN MEN OF LETTERS HONESTLY CRITICISED. J. H. Friswell. *T. W. Robertson*, pp. 345-56.

1871. DRAMATISTS OF THE PRESENT DAY, by Q. Reprinted from the *Athenæum*. *Mr. T. W. Robertson*, pp. 80-93.

1882. ENGLISH DRAMATISTS OF TO-DAY. William Archer. Sampson Lowe, Marston, Searle and Rivington, pp. 21-26.

1883. NIGHTS AT THE PLAY, 2 vols. Dutton Cook. For

contemporary criticism of Robertson's plays, see vol. 1, pp. 40, 96, 100.

1888. MR. AND MRS. BANCROFT ON AND OFF THE STAGE. Richard Bentley and Son (Fourth Edition). See especially chapters vi, xi.

1888. PLAYS AND PLAYWRIGHTS I HAVE KNOWN, 2 vols. John Coleman. Chatto and Windus. *Tom Robertson*, pp. 140-164.

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1893. LIFE AND WRITINGS OF T. W. ROBERTSON. T. Edgar Pemberton. Bentley & Son.

1895. JOHN HARE, COMEDIAN, 1865-1895. T. Edgar Pemberton. George Routledge and Sons. See especially chapter i.

1897. THE ENGLISH STAGE. Translated from the French [of A. Filon] by Frederic Whyte, with an Introduction by Henry Arthur Jones. (Chapters iii and iv especially.) John Milne; Dodd, Mead & Co., N. Y.

1899. TRELAWNEY OF THE WELLS. A Comedietta in Four Acts. A. W. Pinero. R. H. Russell, N. Y. This represents the theatrical conditions discussed in the Introduction to this edition.

1899. THE DRAMA OF YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY, 2 vols. Clement Scott. *Passim*, especially chapter xv, vol. 1, *The Success of Tom Robertson*.

1904. REAL CONVERSATIONS. William Archer. W. Heine-mann. No. 1. *With Mr. Arthur Pinero*.

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